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TO THE STARS*

(A drama in four acts)

By Leonid Andreieff

Translated from the Russian by Dr. A. Goudiss

CHARACTERS

Sergius Nikolaievitch Ternovsky, a Russian scientist living abroad, director of an observatory, renowned, member of many academies and scientific societies. He is a man of about fifty-six years of age, but looks younger, with easy, quiet, and very precise movements. His gesticulations, too, are reserved and correct — nothing superfluous. He is polite and attentive, but with it all he appears cold.

Inna Alexandrovna, his wife, of about the same age.

Anna, their daughter, a young lady of about twenty-five, handsome and cold; dresses unbecomingly.

Petia (Peter), their son, a youth aged eighteen, pale, delicate, graceful, with dark, wavy hair, wears a white turned-down collar.

Nikolai (Nicholas), their son. A young man, aged twenty-seven.

Verchovtzeff, Valentine Alexeievitch, Anna's husband. A red-haired man of thirty; self-confident, commanding, sarcastic, and at times coarse. A civil engineer.

Marusia (Mary), a handsome young lady of twenty, Nikolai's bride.

Pollock, a tall, bony man, thirty-two years old, with a large, hairless head. Correct; mechanical. Smokes cigars. Ternovsky's assistant.

Luntz, Yosiph Abramovitch, a young man of Jewish extraction, aged twenty-eight. From handling mathematical instruments he has acquired the habit of being precise and reserved in his movements, but when provoked he forgets himself and gesticulates with all the passion of a Soulterner-Semite. Ternovsky's assistant.

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ZHITOFF, VASSILY VASSILIEVITCH, a large, hairy, awkward (bearlike) gentleman, of an undetermined age. He is constantly sitting. Good looking in a certain sense. TERNOVSKY'S assistant.

TREITCH, a workman, aged thirty, dark, slender, and very handsome. Has deeply arched brows; farsighted. Unassuming, serious, and not communicative.

SCHTOLTZ, young, little, with small but regular features; dresses neatly; speaks with a thin voice. Has an insignificant appearance.

MINNA, a maid-servant.

FRANTZ, a male-servant.

An old woman.

ACT I

An observatory in the mountains, night. Two rooms; the first is a kind of dining-room with thick, white walls; the windows, through which something white is seen tossing about in the darkness, have very wide sills; a huge fireplace with burning blocks; the room is furnished in a simple and strict fashion, lacking soft furniture and curtains; a few engravings on the walls, portraits of astronomers, and the Men of the East appearing before Christ, attracted by the star. A staircase leading into TERNOVSKY'S *library and studio. The next is a large working studio, resembling the front one but without the fireplace. A few tables; photographs of stars and the surface of the moon on the walls; some simple astronomical instruments. In the front room, seated at the table,* TERNOVSKY'S *assistant,* POLLOCK, *is seen working;* PETIA *is reading;* LUNTZ *nervously paces the room; outside the mountain a snowstorm is heard whistling and wailing; the wood is crackling in the fireplace; the German cook is making coffee. Ths signal bell is ringing rhythmically and monotonously calling lost ones.*

Inna Alexandrovna.— Ringing, ringing, but of no use. Four days have passed and not a soul has shown up. You wait and wait and wonder if the people are alive at all.

Petia (raising his head).— But who should come? And who would come up here?

Inna Alexandrovna.— One can't tell; somebody might come up from below.

Petia.— The people are not disposed to climb mountains.

Zhitoff.— Yes, the situation is rather an embarrassing one, no roads, and we are as if in a besieged city,— neither out nor in.

Inna Alexandrovna.— And in a few days we'll have nothing to eat, either.

Zhitoff.— Then we'll do without.

Inna Alexandrovna.— It is all very well for you to talk that way. Vassily Vassilievitch, you can live on your own fat for days, but what is Sergius Nikolaievitch going to do?

Zhitoff.— Well, put some provisions away for him and the rest will have to do without. I say, Luntz, O Luntz, you'd better sit down! (LUNTZ *does not reply, and keeps on pacing.*)

Inna Alexandrovna.— What a country. Just wait a moment. I think some one is knocking. Just a moment! (*Listens.*) No, I was mistaken. What a storm! You seldom see such storms in your region.

Zhitoff.— Yes, we have them in the Stepps.

Inna Alexandrovna.— I don't know. I never lived in the Stepps. How the windows are shaking!

Petia.— You are waiting in vain, mamma, no one will come.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But perhaps? (*A pause.*) Think I'd better read the old papers again. But I've read them a dozen times. Yosiph Abramovitch, you haven't heard anything, have you?

Luntz (*stopping*).— Where in the world can I get news from? What strange questions you ask. By God, it is unbearable! Just ask yourself, where could I obtain news.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Come, come, Luntz, don't be angry. My heart bleeds when I think of what is going on there. O God!

Zhitoff.— They're fighting.

Inna Alexandrovna.— They're fighting! It is so easy for you to say that, for none of your own are fighting. But I have children there! And one is shut off from the world as though living in the woods,— worse than that, for in the woods one can at least see a bird flying by, or a rabbit jump about, but here ——

Luntz (*pacing the floor*).— Maybe they have already won a complete victory. Perhaps they have already erected a new structure upon the ruins of the old one.

Zhitoff.— I don't think so. At any rate, it didn't look like it some days ago.

Petia.— Why do you doubt it? Haven't you read in the papers of the resignation of the ministry, and don't you know that the city has been barricaded and the people are already in possession of the Town Hall, and in five days a great many more changes may have taken place?

Zhitoff.— Well, it may be, it is hard to tell. Luntz, you'd better sit down. According to my estimation you've made for the last couple of days at least two hundred miles.

Luntz.— Please let me alone! I don't interfere with your affairs, and let me mind my own, also. How rude it is to force oneself into the soul of another. Why don't I say to you 'Wake up, Zhitoff! Don't be sleeping all the time; you've already slept away a lifetime.' I don't say that.

(PETIA *approaches* LUNTZ *and addresses him in a subdued voice; they walk alongside each other, exchanging words occasionally.*)

Inna Alexandrovna (*whispering to Zhitoff*).— How touchy he is! Well, Vassily Vassilievitch, why not have a cup of coffee, and drown our sorrow, as the saying is?

Zhitoff.— I'd rather have tea.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, yes! so would I, but where can you get it? I should certainly enjoy a cup of tea myself, especially with raspberry juice,— it's delicious!

Zhitoff.— Oh, sugar would do for me.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Isn't it strange, Vassily Vassilievitch, how I got used to everything here; the mountains, the society of people,— in a word to everything. But there is one thing that I cannot quite forget, and that is the birch grove. As soon as I recall it, and begin to brood over it, I get so nervous that I must cry for a couple of hours. We had in our estate a mansion, built upon a hill and standing in the midst of a birch grove. Oh, what a grove! After the rain it would give off such a delicious fragrance that —— that —— (*wipes her eyes*).

Zhitoff.— Why shouldn't you take a trip to Russia for a few months?

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, how can I leave him alone? He has tried to persuade me to go many a time, but it is impossible. He may be suddenly taken sick; we are youngsters no more, you know.

Zhitoff.— I'll take care of him.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, no! there it is no use talking: I won't go. As for the birch grove, I'll try to get along without it. I merely mentioned it in passing. It is not so bad here, after all. Spring is coming ——

Zhitoff.— And if he were sent away to Siberia, would you follow him?

Inna Alexandrovna.— And why not? I suppose there are people in Siberia, too.

Zhitoff.— You are a darling, Inna Alexandrovna.

Inna Alexandrovna (*gently*).— And you, stupid boy, mustn't talk that way to an old woman. By the way, why don't you get married? You could live with your wife right here with us.

Zhitoff.— Oh, no, how can I? You know I am a nomadic animal. Can hardly remain in one place.

Inna Alexandrovna (*smiling*).— Oh, yes! you look it!

Zhitoff.— I am here to-day— may be somewhere else to-morrow. I shall soon give up astronomy, too. I must see Australia yet!

Inna Alexandrovna.— What for?

Zhitoff.— Well, just to see how some people live in this world of ours.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But, Vassily Vassilievitch, you have no money. Only those can afford to travel who have plenty of coin.

Zhitoff.— I am not going to travel. I shall try to get some employment on the railroad or in a factory.

Inna Alexandrovna.— What, an astronomer?

Zhitoff.— Oh, it is not so difficult to accomplish. I am familiar with mechanics and not being spoiled, — I need but very little.

(*A pause. The storm is raging harder.*)

Petia.— Mamma, where is papa? Is he working?

Inna Alexandrovna.— Yes; he asked not to be disturbed.

Petia (*shrugging his shoulders*).— I can't understand how he can work in such a time.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Well, you see he can. You think it would be better for him to sit around idle? Here is Pollock working, too!

Petia.— Oh, well, Pollock! Who says anything about him — Pollock! (PETIA *whispering to* LUNTZ.)

Zhitoff.— Pollock is a man with talent. I predict he'll become famous in about five years from now. An energetic fellow! (INNA ALEXANDROVNA *is smiling.*)

What are you laughing about? Don't you think I am right?

Inna Alexandrovna.— I am not laughing at your words. But I must say Pollock is very odd looking. I know it is not right to laugh, but one can't control oneself at times. He reminds me of some instrument,— by the way, what instrument do we have that looks like him?

Zhitoff.— I don't know.

Inna Alexandrovna.— An astrolabe, I think.

Zhitoff.— I don't know. I must say it is certainly a mystery to me how you allow yourself to laugh.

Inna Alexandrovna (*sighing*).—Let me tell you one can't do without laughing at times. A good hearty laugh is very beneficial under certain circumstances. Let me relate to you a very amusing incident of mine. It happened during our journey from Russia. Times were very bad with us. Besides our traveling expenses we had but very little money to spare. And what do you think I did? Lost our tickets. And how it ever happened — I am puzzled to this very day. I had never lost a pin in my life before and now ——

Zhitoff.— Where did it happen — in Russia?

Inna Alexandrovna.— If it only had been in Russia. No, we were already abroad. Here we were, the whole bunch of us, surrounded by all kinds of bundles, waiting in some Austrian station,— and as I was thus sitting brooding over our condition — I accidentally cast my eyes upon one of our bundles — a pillow, I think it was,— and was seized with such a fit of laughter that upon my word I am ashamed of it yet!

Zhitoff.— Tell me, Inna Alexandrovna, I have never been able to find out, why has Sergius Nikolaievitch been banished from Russia?

Inna Alexandrovna.— No, he wasn't; he left the country of his own accord. He had a misunderstanding with some of the authorities; they wanted him to sign some kind of a disagreeable paper, which, of course, he flatly refused to do. Then he had a few sharp words with the minister himself, telling him what he thought of him. So we left the country. Meanwhile he had been offered this observatory; and here we are, sir, living upon these rocks some twelve years already.

Zhitoff.— Then he can go back, if he wants to?

Inna Alexandrovna.— But what for? You know you can't find such an observatory in Russia.

Zhitoff.— But the birch grove?

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, don't talk nonsense. Wait, some one is knocking (*wailing of the storm*).

Zhitoff.— No, no; you are only imagining.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But perhaps — Minna dear, suppose you go down and find out if anybody has arrived. Oh, that infernal bell will drive me crazy, I always imagine that some one is coming or going. Hark! (*The bell is heard ringing, the storm raging.*)

Zhitoff.— Yes, these March storms are very violent, as a rule. Down below the people are enjoying spring, and we are in the midst of winter up here. I reckon the almonds are through blossoming already.

Minna.— No one has come, madame!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, what is happening there? What is going on there? I am so anxious for my Kolenka [Nicholas]. I know him so well; he wouldn't stop for anything — a gun, a cannon — he doesn't care. O God! I can hardly think of it! If I could only get a word from him. Four anxious days passed — just like being in a grave.

Zhitoff.— Please stop worrying. You'll soon be able to find out everything. The barometer is rising.

Inna Alexandrovna.— If he were only fighting for his own country's cause. But to fight in a foreign land and for a strange people — what business has he to do it?

Petia (*passionately*).— Nicholas is a hero! He is for all the oppressed and the downtrodden, whosoever they may be. All men are equal and it matters not what country they belong to.

Luntz.— Strangers! Country, government — I cannot comprehend. What do you mean by strangers, government? It is these divisions and separations that create so many slaves, for when one house is being pillaged and robbed, the people of the next one look on quietly; and while people of one house are being murdered the people of the next one say, 'That does not concern us.' Our own. Strangers! Here I am — a Jew; have no country of my own — therefore I must be a stranger to all? No, not at all. I am a brother to all! Yes! (*pacing*) yes!

Petia.— Indeed it is absurd to divide this earth of ours into districts.

Luntz (*pacing nervously*).—Yes, all you hear is our own. Strangers! Niggers! Jews!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Again! again you are singing the same old song! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves! Did I say anything? Do I say that Kolenka is not doing the right thing? Haven't I urged him myself, saying: 'Go, Kolenka dear, make haste, for you'll only torture yourself here.' O God! I blaming my Kolenka, I merely say that I am sick at heart. Don't forget what a miserable and weary week I've passed. You are all resting peacefully, but I am passing sleepless nights, always watching, always listening — but always to the same thing: to the storm and the bell, the bell and the storm — wailing as though burying somebody. No, I fear I shall never behold dear Kolenka! (*The storm and the bell.*)

Petia (*tenderly*).— Don't worry, mamma dear, please don't! Everything will turn out all right. He is not alone there; and what makes you think that something will necessarily happen to him? Be calm, please.

Zhitoff.— Besides, Marusia and Anna with her husband are there also. They'll take care of him. Then you know how he is beloved by every one, and like a general he is surrounded by a staff that will protect him all right.

Inna Alexandrovna.— I know it, I know it, but I can't help it! But pray, don't bring in Marusia as an example. Anna is prudent, but Marusia — she'll run to the front ahead of others! I know her.

Petia.— What would you want her to do? You surely don't expect Marusia to hide herself?

Inna Alexandrovna.— Again! Go ahead and fight as long as you please, I don't object to it. Only don't try to comfort me as though I were a child. I know what I know — I am no baby. Some years ago I had a fight with wolves myself. There you have it!

Zhitoff.— What, you fighting wolves? I didn't expect you to be such a heroine! How did you come to do it? Tell us.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, nonsense. I was returning home one winter night on horseback, when suddenly I was attacked by a bunch of them. I frightened them off with my gun.

Zhitoff.— What, you can shoot, too?

Inna Alexandrovna.— Vassily Vassilievitch, one living a life like ours must learn everything. I have accompanied Sergius Nikolaievitch on an expedition to Turkestan and rode fifteen hundred miles on horseback, manlike fashion. But that isn't all. I have had some other adventures: Was once drowning, twice burning. . . . Let me tell you, however, Vassily Vassilievitch, there is nothing more terrible in this world than a sick child. Once during an expedition, Kolushka (Nicholas) was taken sick with a sore throat. We thought at first it was diphtheria. You can imagine our anxiety. Without a physician, without medicine, the nearest village being some fifty miles off. I ran out from the tent and threw myself on the ground with such force that it is even awful to think of it now. I had already lost two children, you know, one at the age of seven, Serge was his name; the other when quite a baby.

Anuto [Anna], too, once nearly died; but why recall those days? Hard is the lot of a mother, Vassily Vassilievitch! Thank God for having given me at least good children.

Zhitoff.— Yes, your Nicholas is a wonderful young man!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Nicholas, oh, yes! I have seen a good many people in my life, but have never met such a noble soul. I said a while ago he had no business to fight for other people's cause — one can see at once that I am selfish; but Kolenka, if he saw a lion destroying an anthill — I assure you he would rush at him with bare arms. That's his nature. Oh, what is happening there? What is going on there?

Zhitoff.— If I could only give up the idea of going to Australia.

Pollock (*entering*).— Perhaps you will have a cup of black coffee, esteemed Inna Alexandrovna.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Why certainly, certainly! Minna! (*appearing*).

Zhitoff.— Well, how are things, colleague?

Pollock.— Quite well. What are you doing? Idle as ever?

Zhitoff.— Look at the weather; how can one work. Besides, the events ———

Pollock.— You'd better say Russian indolence.

Zhitoff.— It might be indolence. Who can tell?

Pollock.— It isn't right, dear comrade. Luntz, have you finished Sergius Nikolaievitch's mathematical tables yet?

Luntz (*sharply*).— No!

Pollock.— Too bad!

Luntz.— Bad or good — that does not concern you. You are only an assistant like myself and have no right to reprimand me. Yes!

Pollock (*turning aside and shrugging his shoulders*).— Order the coffee to be brought into my room, will you, Zhitoff?

Zhitoff.— All right. What is Sergius Nikolaievitch working on now?

Pollock.— Oh, he has lots of work on hand. I am a hard worker myself, but I certainly admire his tenacity and power of intellect. He has a wonderful brain, Zhitoff! It seems to be able to withstand the hardest kind of friction, just like some of our instruments. He works with the regularity of a clock, too. I am certain one couldn't find one single error in all his calculations, embracing some thirty years' labor.

Luntz (*listening*).— He is not only a worker, he is a genius.

Pollock.— Quite true. His figures and calculations are living and marching like soldiers.

Luntz.— With you everything is brought down to a discipline. I can't understand your codet — poesy ——

Pollock.— Without discipline — there is no victory, my dear Luntz.

Zhitoff.— True!

Luntz.— I can appreciate Sergius Nikolaievitch much better than you can. I am sure he sees infinity as plain as we see our walls, yes!

Pollock.— I have no objection to that. By the way, is the revolution ended? Have you any information?

Zhitoff.— How can you get any information? Don't you hear what is going on outside?

Pollock.— I never thought of the weather.

Petia.— According to the latest reports ——

Pollock.— Never mind the latest reports, you just tell me when it will all end; I don't care to go into details.

Inna Alexandrovna (*entering*). —No, no one has arrived. I wanted to convince myself.—— A regular desert.

Pollock.— You'll be so kind, dear Inna Alexandrovna, as to send the coffee into my room.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Very well, very well. Go on with your work. Work at present is simply a blessing. (*Exit Pollock.*)

Petia.— But I think there are moments in our life when one has to sacrifice his work, it being dishonorable to work ——

Inna Alexandrovna.— Petia, Petia!

Petia.— I can stand it no longer! Why don't you let me go there? I shall go insane here — in this hole!

Inna Alexandrovna.— But, Petia dear, you are too young. You are barely eighteen years old.

Petia.— Nikolai had already been in prison at the age of nineteen.

Inna Alexandrovna.— And what good do you see in that?

Petia.— He worked!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, mercy; well, speak to your father about it; if he consents — very well.

Petia.— He told me to go.

Zhitoff.— Well, why didn't you?

Petia.— Oh, I don't know, can't do it. There is such a great struggle going on there, but I — I can't do it! (*Exit.*)

Luntz.— Petia is getting nervous again. You ought to take good care of him. (*Follows* PETIA.)

Inna Alexandrovna.— But what can I do with him? Oh, merciful Father!

Zhitoff.— Nonsense, it will blow over.

Inna Alexandrovna. He is so delicate, so frail, just like a girl. How can he go? He has so much changed lately! And here is this Luntz, instead of calming him down, he ——

Zhitoff.— Oh, well, Luntz,—he himself looks as if he were going to have a fit of hysterics some of these days.

Inna Alexandrovna.— I see it myself. Thank the Lord that you are at least calm and peaceful,— otherwise there would be but one place for me; rest in the grave.

Zhitoff.— Oh, I am always calm, was probably born that way. Would gladly enjoy an occasional 'nervous spell,' but it won't work.

Inna Alexandrovna.— An excellent temperament.

Zhitoff.— Oh, I don't know, rather a convenient one. What a pity we didn't get the papers. I enjoy reading about the excitement of other people.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Did you know that Luntz lost his parents some four years ago while he was away abroad studying? They were killed during a Jewish massacre.

Zhitoff.— Yes, I have heard.

Inna Alexandrovna.— He never talks about it himself. He can't bear it. What an unfortunate young man; it breaks my heart whenever I look at him. Knocking again?

Zhitoff.— No.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Some three years ago, on just a day like this, a peddler 'dropped in'; he was almost frozen to death, but he soon revived and at once commenced doing business.

Zhitoff.— I may go out peddling myself to Australia.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But how can you? You don't understand the English language.

Zhitoff.— I understand a little,— picked it up in California.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Well, I think I'll read the papers again. Can't think of anything else to do at present, anyhow. You ought to read some, too, Vassily Vassilievitch.

Zhitoff.— I don't feel like it. I'd rather sit at the fireplace.

(INNA ALEXANDROVNA *puts on her glasses and looks over the papers.* ZHITOFF *moves to the fireplace.* POLLOCK *is seen working. The storm is heard raging, the bell ringing.*)

Inna Alexandrovna.— I wonder what my Sergius Nikolaievitch is doing? I haven't seen him for a couple of days already. He eats and drinks in his studio. Doesn't want to see anybody.

Zhitoff.— Y-yes! (*A pause.*)

Inna Alexandrovna (*reading*).— What dreadful things! What is a machine-gun, Vassily Vassilievitch?

Zhitoff.— It is a kind of quick-firing gun (*a pause;* MINNA *is seen carrying coffee to* POLLOCK).

Inna Alexandrovna.— I should like to use that peculiar machine myself.

Zhitoff.— Y-yes. It is a dangerous article (*a pause*).

Inna Alexandrovna.— How it is storming! It is impossible to read. Oh, don't go to Australia, Vassily Vassilievitch; I shall certainly miss you very much. You won't go, will you?

Zhitoff.— Impossible. I am of a restless nature. I would like to trot all over the globe and see what the earth is made of. From Australia I may go to India. I should like to see some tigers in a wild state.

Inna Alexandrovna.— What do you want tigers for?

Zhitoff.— I don't know myself. I, Inna Alexandrovna, like to see and examine things. There was a small hill in the village where I was born; I used to mount that hill when I was a little boy and sit there for hours watching things. I even took up astronomy with the intention of seeing and looking at things. I don't care much for calculations; it really makes no difference whether it be twenty millions or thirty. I don't like to talk much, either.

Inna Alexandrovna.— All right. I won't bother you. Keep on looking.

(*A pause. The storm and the bell.*)

Zhitoff (*not turning*).— Are you going to Canada with Sergius Nikolaevitch to see the eclipse?

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, to Canada! Why certainly! How can he go without me?

Zhitoff.— You will have a hard journey. It is rather far off.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Nonsense. If things should only turn out here satisfactorily. O God! It is awful to think of it. (*Silence. The storm. The bell.*)

Inna Alexandrovna.— Vassily Vassilievitch!

Zhitoff.— Ma'ame.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Did you hear?

Zhitoff.— No!

Inna Alexandrovna.— I must have been mistaken again (*a pause*). Vassily Vassilievitch, don't you hear?

Zhitoff.— What?

Inna Alexandrovna.— A shot, I think.

Zhitoff.— Who is going to fire guns here? It is simply an hallucination.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But I heard it so distinctly. (*A pause. A distant shot is heard.*)

Zhitoff.— Oh, oh! shooting, indeed!

Inna Alexandrovna (*running and shouting*).— Minna, Minna! Frantz. (ZHITOFF *rises slowly;* PETIA *and* LUNTZ *hurriedly pass through the room. Another shot not far off.*)

Petia.— Well, what is it?

Luntz.— Don't know. Come!

(ZHITOFF *stands at the window listening.* POLLOCK *turns around his head, looks into the vacant room and resumes his work again. Slamming of the door and barking of dogs are heard.*)

Inna Alexandrovna (*entering*).— I sent out the men with Vulcan [a dog]; somebody must have been lost.

Zhitoff.— Yes, but the bell?

Inna Alexandrovna.— The wind blows in our direction. You heard how distinct the gunshots were.

Pollock.— May I be of any service to you? Not yet. Let us prepare something hot anyhow. (*Slamming of the door. A murmuring is heard. Accompanied by all, enter, wrapped up and covered with snow,* ANNA *and* TREITCH *carrying* VERCHOVTZEFF.)

Inna Alexandrovna (*on the threshold*).— What is it, Anna?

Anna (*taking off her shawl*).— Mamma, hurry up, please; get ready something hot. We are nearly dead. I am afraid Valentine is frostbitten. Quick. (*Falls on the chair fainting.*)

Inna Alexandrovna (*hurrying towards* VERCHOVTZEFF).— Valentine, what's the matter?

Verchovtzeff (*weakly*).— Don't — worry, mother; it's a trifle — my feet ——

Inna Alexandrovna.— Who is this gentleman?

Treitch.— A friend.

Inna Alexandrovna (*looking around terrorstricken*).— Where is Kolia [Nicholas]? (*A pause.* PETIA *with tears in his eyes throws himself on* INNA ALEXANDROVNA.)

Petia.— Mamma, dearest mamma! Don't be frightened. Nothing has happened, nothing!

Inna Alexandrovna (*pushing him off gently; rather calmed*).— But where is he?

Anna (*having recovered and now busying herself with her wounded husband*).— O mamma, there is nothing serious. He is in prison.

Luntz.— What does it mean? Wait, just wait! I can't understand it; it means then?

Inna Alexandrovna.— In prison! In what prison?

Anna.— My God! Can't you understand? We have escaped and that's all! We have come here for shelter.

Pollock.— Is the revolution ended?

Luntz.— I can't understand it. Is it possible?

Treitch.— Yes, we are defeated (*a pause*).

Anna.— Mamma, why don't you see to it that we get something stimulating. Have you any hot water, brandy? Have you some wadding in the house?

Inna Alexandrovna.— You shall have everything in a moment. (*Calling.*) Minna! (*The latter appearing.*) In prison!

Zhitoff.— Why don't you let Sergius Nikolaievitch know?

Inna Alexandrovna.— I shall send for him in a minute.

Pollock.— Pray tell us how it all happened — Mr. — Mr. ——

Treitch.— Treitch is my name.

Verchovtzeff (*feebly*).— If it hadn't been for Treitch I should have perished. Anna, don't be so busy. I am feeling excellent.

Anna.— I fail to understand how we ever reached the place. It was something awful! We have been struggling in the mountains ever since eight o'clock in the morning; the whole day. We had a miraculous escape on the frontier.

Luntz.— I can't believe ——

Petia.— Valentine, what is the matter with you? Have you any pain?

Verchovtzeff.— My feet are 'peeled off' a little — with a piece of shell — also my head — Nonsense!

Luntz.— Have they been using shells on you?

Verchovtzeff.— The bourgeois — defended themselves — pretty fair.

Anna.— Valentine, you mustn't talk! Oh, what a horrible, what a ghastly sight it was. Shells were bursting all around, killing and wounding thousands of people. I saw myself heaps of dead at the town hall.

Inna Alexandrovna (*approaching*).— What about Nicholas? Tell me where he is?

Anna.— Actually speaking, no one knows where he is.

Inna Alexandrovna.— What? didn't you say ——

Petia.— And Marusia is absent too! You are concealing something from us. And didn't you say, Luntz?

Luntz.— Petia, Petia! But I did not think — I can't believe it ——

Anna.— But there is no necessity to conceal things.

Treitch.— Calm yourself, Madame Ternovsky. I am sure Nikolai is alive.

Anna.— Treitch will tell us all about it. He fought with Nicholas side by side.

Treitch.— He was wounded at the last moment, when the barricade was almost in the hands of the soldiers. He stood alongside of me and I saw him fall.

Inna Alexandrovna.— My God! Dangerously wounded? Perhaps he was killed. Oh, speak!

Treitch.— I don't think he was wounded dangerously.

Frantz.— The professor told me to tell you that he'll be here directly.

Anna.— Of course, what's the use of hurrying!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Please go on.

Treitch.— He was wounded in the back, either with a bullet or a piece of shell. At first he was conscious, but soon fainted away. I picked him up and carried him to a little street, but here I encountered a detachment of dragoons; seeing that my resistance would be useless, and that it would only expose Nikolai to their bullets, I left them the body and went back to ours. He is probably now in prison.

Inna Alexandrovna (*crying*).— Kolushka, Kolushka! and here we didn't know anything about it. Oh, my heart was telling me all the time — you don't think he is dangerously wounded? Tell me, do you?

Treitch.— I don't think so.

Petia.— How about Marusia? You don't mention her at all. Is she killed?

Anna.— Oh, no! Valentine, do you want some water with brandy?

Treitch.— We saw her many times. She remained there in order to find out comrade Nikolai's whereabouts.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, Marusia dear, you are a darling, upon my word. That's the way to do, that's the way to act. Just think of it. That's a girl for you! Treitch, don't you want a little brandy? Why, you look like a ghost. Take some, my dear, I would fain kiss you, but I know you folk don't like these sentimentalities.

Treitch.— I should consider it a great honor (*kissing each other*). You.

Inna Alexandrovna.— O Marusia, Marusia! And that one, too — Minna! (*Exit.*)

Luntz (*almost crazed*).— Then all was in vain?

Pollock.— It looks that way.

Luntz.— In vain then all the blood shed, all the thousands of useless sacrifices, the glorious and matchless struggle, the — the — oh, curse! why didn't I lay down my head together with my fallen brothers?

Verchovtzeff.—Why, you—expect the—bourgeois—to give up at once — his hold upon the earth? The bourgeois - - is not so foolish — you'll have a chance yet to die.

Treitch.— The struggle isn't over yet.

Pollock.— Are you a workman, Mr. Treitch?

Treitch.— Yes, sir. By the way, I haven't informed Madame Ternovsky, not wishing to worry her, that Nikolai might be shot to death.

Petia.— Shot to death!

Treitch.— Already on my way here a rumor reached my ears that they are executing all the prisoners without even a trial. They don't even spare the wounded.

Petia (*shudders and covers his face with his hands*).— What a horrible thing.

Luntz.— Beasts! They are ever thirsty for human blood. They have their belly full now.

Verchovtzeff.— Yes — they never were — vegetarians, you know.

Luntz.— How can you jest?

Anna.— You mustn't talk, Valia [Valentine].

Verchovtzeff.— It is these skinned feet — of mine — that make me — so merry. I'll shut up now, Anna, I am tired. I am very — anxious to see — the face of the — star-gazer.

Treitch.— Hush! (INNA ALEXANDROVNA *enters*). They are quarreling and we, of course, cannot dictate terms to them.

Zhitoff.— Here is Sergius Nikolaievitch. (SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH *appears at the top of the staircase and speaks while descending.*)

Sergius.— What is the matter? Where is Nicholas?

Inna Alexandrovna.—Don't be alarmed, papa; he is in prison, wounded.

Sergius (*stopping for a moment*).— Do they kill each other yet? Do they still have prisons?

Verchovtzeff (*maliciously*).— He fell — down — from heaven!

ACT II

A spring morning in the mountains; the sky is fair and clear; the sun is shining brightly. In the center — a courtyard with paved walks. The yard is uneven and slanting, fenced off in the back by a low stone wall with a gate in it.

A range of mountains is seen at a distance, but not higher than the one upon which is situated the observatory. To the right, a corner of the observatory structure, tapering off into a high tower. To the left, a corner of the house with a stone porch.

A total absence of vegetation. From the time of the first act three weeks have elapsed. VERCHOVTZEFF *is sitting in a rolling-chair;* ANNA *is wheeling him to and fro.* ZHITOFF *is sitting near the wall, warming himself in the sun. All are dressed in springlike fashion, save* ZHITOFF, *who has a coat on.*

Zhitoff (*sitting*).— Let me wheel him a little, Anna Sergeievna.

Anna.— No, keep still. I don't like to bother anybody. Are you comfortable, Valia?

Verchovtzeff.— Yes, but what is the use of 'turning about' like rats in a trap? Place me alongside of Zhitoff: I also want to derive some benefit from the sun. That's right; thank you!

Anna.— Why are you not working, Zhitoff?

Zhitoff.— It is the fault of the weather; as soon as spring comes I can't remain in the house to save my soul. I warm myself and warm myself and ——

Verchovtzeff.— Aren't you a Turk, Zhitoff?

Zhitoff.— No, sir.

Verchovtzeff.— But it would certainly become you to sit thus and meditate — as they do in Turkey.

Zhitoff.— No, I am no Turk.

Verchovtzeff.— I understand you; it is so nice to sit in the sun. What a pity Nicholas can't have that pleasure. Oh, I know that Sternburg prison; it is never visited by a ray of sunlight, nor can one see the sky. I have spent in that prison but one month, but when I came out I looked like a wet sponge from the dampness. Horrible!

Anna.— I am glad that he is at least alive. I thought surely he had been shot to death.

Verchovtzeff.— Just take your time; they are not through with him yet. Let's wake Marusia, I am anxious to find out what has taken place there.

Zhitoff.— She arrived very late last night.

Verchovtzeff.— I heard her. She woke up the whole house with her singing. I was wondering who could have sung in that mausoleum. I thought it was Pollock, having discovered a new star.

Zhitoff.— Her singing must be taken as a good sign.

Anna.— I can't understand how any one can allow himself to sing when others are asleep.

Inna Alexandrovna (*appearing on the veranda*).— Hasn't Luntz come back yet?

Anna.— No.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But, heavens! what can that mean? Sergius Nikolaievitch needs him. What shall I say to him? Scattered like sheep,— only one, Pollock, is working. Marusia dear was singing last night. When I heard her — my breath almost failed me. Well, I think ——

Verchovtzeff.— Suppose you wake her up, mother.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, no. Not for anything! Let her sleep all day.

Verchovtzeff.— Well, wake up Schtoltz, then.

Inna Alexandrovna.— I am not going to disturb him, either. The man is tired, has brought us such good news, and it would be a sin on my part to bother him. You'd better send me in Luntz as soon as he shows up (*starts to go, then stops at the door*). How are you, Vassily Vassilievitch? Warming yourself in the sun? I filled the box this morning with fresh earth and planted some radishes. Let them grow,— perhaps somebody will enjoy them. (*Exit.*)

Verchovtzeff.— What an energetic old woman. She even thinks of radishes (*a pause*).

Anna.— Are you thinking of anything when you sit and look that way?

Zhitoff.— No. What is the use of thinking? I just look and that's all.

Verchovtzeff.— You are not telling the truth, how can one help thinking? If you are not thinking — then you must be recollecting something.

Zhitoff.— I have no recollections whatsoever. Oh, yes, I once had a nice time in New York. I was stopping in a hotel in one of the liveliest streets. I even had a balcony.

Verchovtzeff.— Well, what of it?

Zhitoff.— Well, I say I had a nice time; I was sitting on the balcony, watching the people: how they walk, how they ride. And the elevated railroad! In a word, very interesting.

Anna.— Have the Americans a high degree of culture?

Zhitoff.— I don't mean that. It is simply very interesting (*a pause*). Indeed, where is Luntz?

Anna.— He went into the mountains with Treitch last night.

Verchovtzeff.— For investigations.

Zhitoff.— What investigations?

Verchovtzeff.— Treitch is always investigating something. He has probably already explored your temple of Uranus and found it to be a first-class armory. Now he is investigating the mountains; he is probably looking for a place to establish a firearm works.

Anna.— Treitch is a dreamer.

Verchovtzeff.— Well, not altogether. His dreams have a kind of strangeness about them, but with all their apparent absurdity they somehow become realized. At any rate, he is an interesting fellow. Talks little, but is a most excellent propagandist. He can inflame the moon herself — to use an astronomical expression. Where did Nicholas get him from?

Petia (*entering*).— Good morning.

Verchovtzeff.— Why are you so gloomy, young rooster?

Petia.— Don't know.

Anna.— Are you aware that Nicholas is in prison?

Petia.— Yes, mamma told me.

Anna.— I can't understand why you are so sour. One would suppose that you are full of vinegar. I hate to look at you.

Petia.— You needn't to.

Zhitoff.— Petia, come, let's go to Australia.

Petia.— What for?

Anna.— You are asking questions just like a child. 'What for? What for?' He was invited yesterday into the mountains, but the first question he asked was 'What for?' Well, what are you eating for?

Petia.— I don't know. Let me alone, Anna!

Verchovtzeff.— I can't say that you are very polite, my friend. (*Pointing to* LUNTZ *and* TREITCH, *who appear covered with dust.*) Ah, there they are. Luntz, the star-gazer, is looking for you. Look out, you'll get it!

Luntz.— Oh, to the — with him. Pardon me, Anna Sergevna.

Anna.— Never mind. I am not a very exemplary daughter, and am willing to share your wishes.

Petia.— How vulgar.

Verchovtzeff.— Well, Treitch, have you had a nice walk? Have you found anything?

Treitch.— A very nice place, indeed.

Anna.— And do you know that Marusia arrived last night?

Treitch (*excitedly*).— You don't say so. How is Nicholas, how is he?

Verchovtzeff.— Oh, he is shot, he is hanged; he's been tortured to death.

Anna.— Oh, don't mind him; he is alive, he is living (*near the window* MARUSIA *is heard singing and playing*).

'In prison dark behind iron bars there sits a young eagle born free.'

Treitch.— He is in prison? Saved?

Marusia.— 'My comrade is sad, he is waving his wings, his bloody food near the window he picks.'

Verchovtzeff.— 'He is picking and stopping and through the window he looks, as though trying my thought to catch; with his voice and his looks he urges me on, as though wanting to say — let us fly away, away!'

Marusia (*appearing — passionately*).— 'Free birds are we! and the time has come, comrade, to fly far away beyond the clouds where the mountain peers white; away where we can behold the blue sea, away, where, alone, the wind and I rejoice together.'

Treitch.— Marusia!

Anna.— What an out of place concert!

Inna Alexandrovna (*following* MARUSIA, *wiping her eyes*).— You dear eaglets of mine!

Verchovtzeff.— You, mother, are pronouncing these words just in the same manner as you would 'You dear chicks of mine.'

Inna Alexandrovna.— Yes, chicks, if you please; especially you who have been plucked as though ready for the soup.

Marusia.— Anna, how do you do? (*To* TREITCH.) A kiss for you.

Treitch (*rapidly covering his eyes with his hand and immediately removing it.*)— I am the happiest mortal.

Marusia.— Kisses to all, to all — and you, too, invalid!

Verchovtzeff.— Have you seen him?

Marusia.— Let us fly away!

Luntz.— That's not right. We are all anxious to know ——

Marusia.— Yes, I have seen him and all. This gentleman here is Mr. Schtoltz; allow me to introduce him to you. He is a wonderful man. At present he is employed in some bank, but in time he'll be of great service to the revolution. He looks very much like a spy and has therefore rendered me great service. Come, Schtolz, make a bow to them.

Schtoltz.— It gives me great pleasure. Good morning.

Marusia.— Petia, dear boy, why are you so sad?

Verchovtzeff.— This, Marusia, speaking modestly, is very mean of you.

Marusia.— Come, come, cripple, don't get excited. How can one get angry to-day? Well, he is in the Sternburg prison.

All.— We know, we know!

Marusia.— Further, they are going to shoot him.

Inna Alexandrovna.— God! Whom, Kolia [Nicholas]?

Marusia.— Don't worry, mamma dear. It will never come to that. I am the Countess Morritz, don't you know, of 'awfully' high birth? My patrimonial estates, of course, being there (*raising and waving her hand in the air*). And they are very malicious, but awfully stupid.

Verchovtzeff.— Yes, so they are.

Marusia.— The most difficult thing was to find out his whereabouts. They hide the names of the prisoners so that they may have an opportunity to dispose of them quietly without a trial. But here Schtoltz gave me a hand. Schtoltz, bow to them.

(*Enter* SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH. *He has an old overcoat on with a small fur cap; all meet him cordially but coldly.*)

Inna Alexandrovna.— Papa, listen to what Marusia is telling us; they were going to shoot him.

Marusia.— No, it is too long a story to tell. In a word: I have threatened, I have pleaded, pointed out to them European public opinion; also his father's importance in the scientific world — and at last the execution has been postponed. I was in prison, too.

Verchovtzeff.— Well, how is he?

Marusia (*confusedly*).— He is — rather sad, but that will pass away.

Inna Alexandrovna.— And the wound?

Marusia.— Oh, that's nonsense, already healing; he is a strong fellow,— you know. But the cell — well,— it is a kind of dirty hole, for which it is difficult to find an adequate name.

Verchovtzeff.— I know it. I have been there before.

Marusia.— And I have raised such a storm that they had to promise me to transfer him to a better room. To you, Sergius Nikolaievitch, he sends his best regards, wishing you success in your researches, and is very interested to know how things are in general.

Anna.— To be in such a position, and yet to think of trifles.

Sergius Nikolaievitch.— Dear boy! I am ever so thankful to you.

Anna.— How grateful!

Luntz.— How about yourself? How did you manage to escape?

Marusia.— I did not escape; the soldiers caught me that same day, but I cried and sobbed so much about my sick grandmother, who was expecting me from the store, that they finally let me go; one soldier, however, struck me slightly with the butt of his gun.

Luntz.— How abominable!

Marusia.— And I had under my dress the flag — our flag.

Verchovtzeff.— Is it all right?

Marusia.— I have pinned it with English pins, but it is so heavy I have brought it here. This time it has served Schtoltz as a kind of jacket. If Schtoltz were only not so small ——

Verchovtzeff.— Then he would be big. Why did not you fetch the flag here? I should like to look at it — our flag! Oh, the deuce!

Marusia.— No, I am going to unfold it when we fight another battle. Treitch, do you know who betrayed us?

Treitch.— Yes.

Schtoltz.— Betrayers and traitors ought to be punished by death. (MARUSIA *is laughing.* TREITCH *is smiling.*)

Verchovtzeff.— How bloodthirsty you are, Mr. Schtoltz.

Schtoltz.— One can kill with electricity, then there will be no blood.

Inna Alexandrovna.— What about Kolushka?

Marusia.— Nicholas? Well, listen. Is there no one here? How about your servants? Well, all right. Listen — he must escape.

Treitch.— I am going with you.

Marusia.— No, Treitch. Kolia ordered you to remain here. You know how you are being searched for.

Treitch.— That doesn't matter.

Marusia.— But you are not needed. I have already arranged everything. As for you, you'll find something to do here, on the frontier, Treitch. All we want is money — and plenty of it. Nicholas takes with him a soldier and a keeper. Of course he'll come here — that's understood. I must be departing to-day — we can't afford to lose a minute.

Verchovtzeff.— Bravo, Marusia!

Marusia.— Dear friend, I am so happy!

Inna Alexandrovna (*looking at* SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH).— Money?

Sergius Nikolaievitch (*gazing at* INNA ALEXANDROVNA).— Inna, you are the cashier — have we any money?

Inna Alexandrovna (*embarrassed*).— Only those three thousand ——

Marusia.— But five are needed.

Inna Alexandrovna.— And even these —— (*gazes at* SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH, *who is silently nodding his head, joyfully*).— Well, we have three thousand roubles already, thank God!

Zhitoff (*confused*).— We'll make a collection. I have three hundred roubles myself.

Luntz.— Pollock is a rich fellow; very rich.

Anna.— I don't feel like appealing to him; he is so peculiar.

Verchovtzeff.— Nonsense. Those are the very people that ought to be 'skinned.' Petia, go and fetch Pollock. Tell him very important business, otherwise he wouldn't come.

Marusia.— Well, the main thing is done; we have got the money! (*Sings.*) 'With his voice and his look he is urging me on, as though wishing to say let us fly away.'

Treitch, I want to speak a word to you. How dirty you are! where were you? (*Exit.*)

Luntz.— Oh, what a girl! she is a sun. She is a whirlwind of igneous powers. She is a Judith!

Anna.— Yes, rather too much fire. A revolution is not in need of your whirlwinds, explosions,— a revolution is a profession, if you please, requiring lots of patience, perseverance, and calmness.

Luntz.— A revolution requires talent.

Anna.— It may be; but some people are very much abusing this word 'talent,' nowadays. One performing tricks on a rope is talented. One gazing all his life at the stars ——

Verchovtzeff.— Yes, and how are the affairs in heaven, esteemed Sergius Nikolaievitch?

Sergius.— All right. And how are the affairs on earth?

Verchovtzeff.— Very bad, as you see. Things are always nasty on this earth of ours, esteemed star-gazer. There is always somebody here who is after another fellow's throat. One is crying, another betraying. My feet hurt me. Oh, we are very far from the harmony of the heavenly spheres.

Sergius.— We don't always have harmony; there, too, catastrophes are inevitable.

Verchovtzeff.— Very sad; it means we can have no hope for heaven, either. What are you thinking of Mr. — Mr. — Schtoltz?

Schtoltz.— I am thinking that every man should be strong.

Verchovtzeff.— Well, well; are you strong?

Schtoltz.—Unfortunately nature deprived me at birth of certain qualities that go to make up strength. For example, I am afraid of blood ——

Verchovtzeff.— And spiders? By the way, do you buy your clothes ready made, or do you have them made to order?

Pollock (*entering*).— Good morning, gentlemen, what can I do for you?

Verchovtzeff.— Listen, Pollock; we need two thousand roubles — it is not a loan, because I don't believe anybody will ever pay it back to you ——

Pollock.— May I ask you for what purpose?

Verchovtzeff.— To effect Nikoli's escap efrom prison. Are you willing to advance?

Pollock.— With pleasure.

Verchovtzeff.— He ——

Pollock.— No, no; without details, please. Esteemed Sergius Nikolaievitch, may I use your refractor to-day?

Sergius.— Help yourself. I have a holiday to-day. (POLLOCK *goes out bowing.*)

Verchovtzeff.— That's a learned man for you. Isn't he, Sergius Nikolaievitch?

Sergius.— He is a very capable fellow.

Anna.— Of what use is astronomy?

Verchovtzeff.— To know how to compose almanacs, I suppose. (MARUSIA *and* TREITCH *approaching.*)

Marusia.— I hope you'll do it, Treitch. Sergius Nikolaievitch, they are criticising you. Anna hates astronomy as much as though that science were her personal enemy.

Sergius.— I am used to that, Marusia.

Anna.— I have no personal enemies — you know that very well. And the reason I don't like astronomy is because I can't understand how people can devote so much time to the study of heaven, when this earth of ours needs so much attention.

Zhitoff.— Astronomy is the triumph of reason.

Anna.— But reason in my opinion would be more triumphant if there were less hungry people on this earth.

Marusia.— Oh, what beautiful mountains! Look at the beautiful sun. How can you argue, how can you quarrel when the sun is shining so magnificently! You are evidently against science, Anna Sergeievna?

Anna.— Not against science am I, but against the scientists who use science as a pretext to evade public duty.

Schtoltz.— A man must say 'I will'; duty is but slavery.

Inna Alexandrovna.— I don't like these 'smart' discussions. What pleasure is there in arousing each other's temper. Vassily Vassilievitch,— will you ever get up? Here (*takes him aside*); don't you give any of your money. We have enough. Pollock is a generous young man and if need be — (*Laughs*). But he looks like an astrolabe all the same.

Zhitoff.— How about your Canadian expedition now? No money ——

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, we'll get some. We have a whole year yet. I have a talent for getting money. They will probably again attack my old man,— they are glad he is silent,— let me therefore ask you as a friend, Vassily Vassilievitch, to stand up for him.

Zhitoff.— I will.

Inna Alexandrovna.— I must go, I have so much work to do. Kolushka needs some underwear. (*Exit.*)

Sergius (*continuing*).— I am fond of listening to good conversation. In every speech I can discern sparkles of light,— and these are very beautiful — just like the milky way. What a pity that people for the most part talk nonsense.

Anna.— Very often eloquent words are used by some people as an argument for not working.

Verchovtzeff.— What a peaceful individual you are, Sergius Nikolaievitch. I wonder if you ever get insulted. Have you ever cried? I don't mean, of course, during that happy age when you were running around in your little shirt,— I mean at the present time?

Sergius.— Oh, yes, I am very emotional.

Verchovtzeff.— Indeed.

Sergius.— When I first discerned the comet Bela, foretold by Galileo,— I cried.

Verchovtzeff.— A worthy cause for crying, undoubtedly, although beyond my comprehension. What is your opinion, gentlemen?

Luntz.— Well, certainly, but Galileo could have made a mistake.

Verchovtzeff.— Well, in that case, one would have to tear out his hair in despair, I suppose.

Marusia.— You are exaggerating, Valentine.

Anna.— And when his son was nearly shot he remained tranquil.

Sergius.— Every second some human being perishes in the world, and probably every second a whole world is destroyed in the universe. How, then, can one cry and despair over the loss of one human being?

Verchovtzeff.— Good! Don't you think, Schtoltz, it is a very powerful argument? So then, in case Nicholas does not succeed in escaping from prison and they ——

Sergius.— Of course, that will be very painful, but ——

Marusia.— Please don't joke that way, Sergius Nikolaievitch, it hurts me to hear such jests.

Sergius.— But I wasn't jesting. I was never able to crack jokes, although I sometimes enjoy other's joking, Valentine's for example.

Verchovtzeff.— Thank you.

Zhitoff.— It is true, Sergius Nikolaievitch never jokes.

Marusia.— So much the worse.

Verchovtzeff.— How convenient it must be to stop one's ears with astronomical cotton! Everything would be nice and quiet. Let the whole world howl like a dog ——

Luntz.— When young Buddha once beheld a hungry tigress he offered himself to her. Yes. He did not say: I am God, I am occupied with very important matters, and you are but a hungry beast; nay, he offered himself to her!

Sergius.— Do you see the inscription (*pointing to the front of the Observatory.*) *Haec domus Uraniae est. Curae procul este profanae. Tenenitur hic humilis tellus! Hinc itur ad astra!* That means: This is the temple of Uranus. Away, ye earthly cares! Low earth is being trampled upon here. Hence to the stars.

Verchovtzeff.— Very well, but what do you understand by earthly cares, esteemed star-gazer? Here I am with injured feet, the flesh being destroyed with a piece of shell almost to the bone; is this in your opinion also an earthly care or an earthly vanity?

Anna.— Of course.

Sergius.— Yes, death, injustice, misfortune,— all the dark shadows of the earth are but earthly cares.

Verchovtzeff.— If a new Napoleon should appear to-morrow, a new despot who was to crush the whole world with his iron feet — would that, too, be an earthly vanity?

Sergius.— I think so; yes.

Verchovtzeff.— (*Looks around inquiringly and utters a harsh laugh*). Oh, that's what it is!

Anna.— This is outrageous. These are the kinds of gods who don't care how much people suffer so long as they themselves ——

Marusia.— Treitch. Why don't you make some reply?

Treitch.— I am listening.

Verchovtzeff.— Only those can entertain such ideas who receive a fat salary from the government and perch safely on their roof.

Sergius (*blushing*).— Not always safely, Valentine. Galileo died in prison. Giordano Bruno perished at the stake. The road to the stars has always been sprinkled with blood.

Verchovtzeff.— Oh, that doesn't matter. The Christians too were once persecuted, but that, however, did not stop them in turn from 'frying' some of the astronomers alive.

Anna.— Papa even has some relics which he keeps under lock.

Sergius.— Anna! that isn't right.

Verchovtzeff.— What nonsense is that?

Anna.— A piece of brick from some old observatory and scraps of some original manuscript.

Marusia.— Anna! how can you? Nicholas would never allow himself to be so rude ——

Anna.— Nicholas is too kind and gentle; that's his weakness. (PETIA *approaches unobserved and silently places himself by the wall.*)

Verchovtzeff (*irritably*).— Therefore they beat us at every step ——

Marusia.— Never mind! never mind! Treitch, what do you say?

Treitch (*reservedly*).— We must go forward. Some one here mentioned defeats, but I fail to see them. I only know of victories. The earth is but a piece of wax in man's hands. We must knead it, squeeze it — create new forms. But we must go forward. If we encounter a wall, it must be destroyed. If we encounter a mountain it must be removed. Should we encounter an abyss,— we must fly across it. If we have no wings — we must make them.

Verchovtzeff.— Good, Treitch, we must construct wings!

Marusia.— Oh, I feel as though I had wings already.

Treitch (*reservedly*).— We must go forward. If the earth splits under our feet,— we must fasten her together with irons. If she begins to fall to pieces, we must solder her with fire. If heaven begins to press on our heads, — we must raise our arms and toss it off,— thus! (*Tosses it off. Others involuntarily imitate the attitude of* TREITCH, *that of Atlas supporting the world.*) But we must go forward so long as the sun is shining.

Luntz.— But the sun will be extinguished.

Treitch.— Then we must kindle a new one.

Verchovtzeff.— All right; go on.

Treitch.— And so long as it keeps on burning, for ever and everlastingly,— we must go forward. Comrades, the sun too is but a proletariat!

Verchovtzeff.— This is what I call astronomy. Oh, the deuce!

Luntz.— Forward, forever and everlastingly.

Verchovtzeff.— Forward! oh, the devil! (*All form themselves into groups in their excitement.*)

Luntz (*nervously*)— Gentlemen, I beg of you — we have no right to abandon the cause. And the killed! No, gentlemen, not only those who have heroically fought and perished for liberty, but the — victims. There are billions of them, and they are not guilty. And they were killed. (*Silence.*)

Marusia (*crying out*).— I swear before thee,— ye mountains! I swear before thee,— ye sun: I shall set free Nicholas! Have these mountains an echo?

Luntz.— No. If they had they would say 'Amen!'

Anna (*to* ZHITOFF)— How sentimental. I can't understand Valentine.

Zhitoff.— That's nothing. You know I have postponed my trip to Australia. I am anxious to see Nicholas Sergievitch myself.

Marusia (*looking up*).— Oh, I should like to fly!

Verchovtzeff.— This is what I call astronomy! Well, star-gazer, do you like such astronomers?

Sergius.— Yes; I like them. His name is Treitch, if I am not mistaken?

Verchovtzeff.— Yes, he is as much Treitch as I am Bismarck. The devil himself doesn't know his real name.

Luntz (*running from one group to another*).— I am so happy. I am so happy. You know, my parents,— they were killed. And my sister, too. I did not care — I have never cared to talk about it. Why talk? thought I. Let it remain deeply buried in my soul, and I alone know it. And now — Do you know how they were killed? Treitch, do you understand me? I never cared.

Petia (*to* ZHITOFF).— What is the use of all that?

Zhitoff.— No, it's not pleasant.

Petia.— What's the use, when all will perish,— you and I and the mountains. (*All remain standing in groups, except* SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH, *who is standing alone.*)

Verchovtzeff (*to* MARUSIA, *joyfully*).— Treitch deserves to hang. Capital fellow! Where did Nicholas fish him out? Well, Marusia, but he'll escape, won't he?

Marusia (*musing*).— I am afraid of another thing ——

Verchovtzeff.— What else?

Marusia.— No, it isn't worth while talking about — a trifle.

Verchovtzeff.— But what is the matter? What are you meditating over?

Marusia (*doesn't reply; then suddenly starts to laugh and sing*).— 'Come, away let us fly.'

Inna Alexandrovna (*looking through the window*).— My eaglets! dinner is ready.

Verchovtzeff.— Chick — Chick — Chick!

Marusia.— We'll drink champagne! Have you any, mamma dear?

All.— Yes, yes, champagne!

Sergius.— There isn't any champagne, but we have cherry wine. (*Laughter; exclamations.*)

Sergius (*taking Marusia aside*).— Well, Marusia, I am going to leave you. I don't care to be in your way, folks.

Marusia.— Oh, no, stay with us; we are so merry to-day.

Sergius.— Yes; I was going to take a little holiday off for your sake; but I have changed my mind.

Marusia.— Won't you dine with us?

Luntz (*shouting*).— Fetch Pollock. He is an honorable man, and a very nice fellow. I am going after him.

Voices.— Pollock! Pollock!

Sergius.— I am not going to stay.

Marusia.— I am very sorry. Inna Alexandrovna will be very much disappointed.

Sergius.— Tell her I am busy. Stop in to see me, Marusia, before you leave. (*Leaves without being noticed.*)

Marusia.— Schtoltz, where are you? You will be my partner. I have to talk some matters over with you. Doesn't he look like a spy, gentlemen?

Anna.— Marusia is getting to be impolite.

Marusia.— You know I was once going to stay over night in his house but he flatly refused it, saying, 'I am living with a respectable German family, and have promised them not to bring in women nor dogs.'

Schtoltz.— They don't want anybody. I have in my room a brand new sofa, and what do you think they do? Almost every night they come to find out if there is anybody lying on it. Awful people!

Verchovtzeff.— Why don't you leave them? What the devil

Schtoltz.— Can't do it; I have to pay them in advance.

Anna.— You oughtn't to do it.

Schtoltz.— Impossible. They ——

Luntz (*is leading* Pollock — *shouting*).— He is he! I could hardly tear him away from the refractor; he stuck to it like a leach!

Pollock.— Gentlemen, it is an outrage! I have some work to finish ——

Marusia.— Dear Pollock! We are so merry to-day. And you are such a dear good fellow, and are so much liked by everybody.

Pollock.— I am very glad to hear that, but I can't understand why you are so merry. The revolution turned out to be a failure.

Verchovtzeff.— But we have a new scheme; we ——

Pollock (*ironically*).— Oh, yes, certainly, I believe you, I believe you.

Marusia.— Here is to Astronomy (*drinking*). Long live the orbit!

Pollock.— I am very sorry I can't drink any alcoholic beverages. It makes me sick at the stomach and gives me the headache.

Verchovtzeff.— The best drink for Pollock would be machine oil. Pollock, will you drink it?

Marusia.— No, we are going to drink cherry wine, good wine, too.

Luntz.— Come along, comrade, you are a good, honest fellow.

Inna Alexandrovna (*looking out through the window*).— Why don't you get a move on you? I am tired calling you.

Marusia.— Right away. Mamma, dear, right away. Pollock refuses to come. Well, gentlemen, we mustn't be so solemn. Zhitoff, can you sing?

Zhitoff.— Not much.

Luntz.— The Marseillaise!

Marusia.— No, no; the Marseillaise and the flag must be reserved for the new battle.

Treitch.— I second the motion. There are certain songs that should only be sung in a temple.

Verchovtzeff.— Oh, do sing something cheerful. Oh, how the sun is warming up.

Anna.— Valentine, don't uncover your feet.

Marusia (*singing*).— 'The sky is so clear, the sun is so dear,— the sun is inviting' (*all join in, save Petia*).

'When we work with pleasure, we no more think of care,— forward, comrades.

'Glory to the Merry Sun!
For he is the worker of the Earth.
Glory to the Merry Sun!
For he is the worker of the Earth!'

Verchovtzeff.— Move on, Anna. You are wheeling me as though I were dead.

All singing. (POLLOCK *leads the chorus seriously and reservedly.*)

'Storms and tempests the serene sky cannot vanquish;
Beneath the cover of the tempest, within its dark heart,
Lightning is flashing!
Glory to the mighty sun,
The ruler of the Earth!'

(*The last words of the song are repeated behind the corner of the house.* PETIA *remains alone and is gloomily looking about him.*)

All.— (*Behind the curtain.*)

'Glory to the Mighty Sun,
The ruler of the Earth!'

ACT III

A large, dark sitting-room, scantily furnished; absence of soft furniture; two book cases. A piano; in the back wall, a door and two large windows leading to the porch. The door and the windows are open, through which is visible the dark, almost black sky, studded with unusually bright glimmering stars; on a table in the corner, near the wall,— a lamp with a dark shade.

INNA ALEXANDROVNA *is sitting at the table reading the papers,* ANNA *is sewing;* LUNTZ *nervously paces the room;* VERCHOVTZEFF *on crutches is standing at one of the bookcases trying to get a book out; deep silence; the silence keeps up for a few moments after the curtain rises.*

Verchovtzeff (*muttering to himself*).— Oh, the deuce!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Are you aware that the President has refused to pardon Kassowsky?

Verchovtzeff.— Yes.

Inna Alexandrovna.— What does that mean?

Verchovtzeff.— Death!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, merciful God! How long will these things last? Haven't there been enough victims already?

Verchovtzeff (*carrying a book under the arm; drops it*).— Oh, the deuce with you! Anna, pick it up!

Anna (*rising slowly*).—Right away. (LUNTZ *picks up the book silently, puts it on the table and keeps on pacing.*)

Verchovtzeff (*sitting down awkwardly*).— Will you ever cease pricking at that?

Anna.— Well, one must be doing something.

Verchovtzeff.— Can't you read? (ANNA *makes no reply. Silence.*) No, I can't stand it any longer. What a devilish silence there is here — like a grave! Another week like this and I shall throw myself overboard, get drunk, or lick Pollock.

Luntz (*nervously*).—An awful silence. As though Byron's dream had been realized: the sun is extinguished, everything on earth is dead, and we are the last creatures.

Verchovtzeff.— Zhitoff, what are you doing up there?

Zhitoff (*from the porch*).— I am looking.

Verchovtzeff (*with contempt*).— I am looking! (*Silence*) I can't be idle!

Anna.— Be patient, it can't be helped.

Verchovtzeff.— You can have all the patience you want, but I — the deuce (*reading*).

Inna Alexandrovna (*is sitting meditating*).— Serge would have been twenty-one years old now. He was a pretty child, looked like Nicholas. Do you remember him, Anna?

Anna.— No.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But I remember him well. You used to beat him, Anna. You were a mischievous little girl. Death certainly snatched him away suddenly; he was only sick about three days. Appendicitis in such a little child! When they started to cut his abdomen open, will you believe me, Josiph Abramovitch ——

Verchovtzeff.— Mother, will you ever stop that? The idea of spending a whole evening discussing dead people! He is gone — well, let him go; so much the better for him! Come over here, Zhitoff.

Zhitoff.— Right away.

Luntz.— What anguish!

Verchovtzeff.— What is Marusia writing, Inna Alexandrovna?

Inna Alexandrovna (*sighing*).— A whole lot, but I can't make anything out of it. First she promises to come in about a week, then something keeps her back, then again in about a week. Yesterday's letter is the same.

Verchovtzeff.— I know that; thought perhaps you had something new.

Inna Alexandrovna.— I am afraid Kolushka is not well.

Verchovtzeff.— What next? Why, don't you think he is dead?

Luntz.— Then Marusia would steal his corpse and bring it here.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, what dreadful things you are saying!

Zhitoff (*entering*).— Well, what do you want me to say?

Verchovtzeff.— Take a seat. What have you been doing there?

Zhitoff.— Gazed at the stars. How beautiful and restless they look to-day. (PETIA *entering; he is seen passing through the scene several times during the act.*)

Luntz.—Somehow I can't bear the stars to-night; I don't know where to run away from them. I would hide myself in a cellar, but they'll haunt me there, too. Do you understand — I feel as though there were no empty space; as though all these monsters, the living and dead, have crowded above the earth, and are pushing towards her, and there is something in them — I don't know — (*paces nervously, continuing gesticulating*).

Zhitoff.— The atmosphere here is very clear, but in California ——

Verchovtzeff.— Have you been in California?

Zhitoff.— Yes. At the Lick Observatory, in California, one feels a little shaky,— looking. Indeed!

Petia.— Mamma, who is the old woman in the kitchen?

Inna Alexandrovna.—Which one? Oh, that one. She just came in and I told them to take care of her. She belongs down below,— in the valley. I reckon she is a beggar. Can't understand her, she is deaf.

Petia.— How did she ascend the mountain? How could she do it?

Verchovtzeff.— Mother, you ought to establish a poorhouse up here.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Well, I may do it yet, if only Sergius Nikolaievitch gives his consent. You ought to read.

Petia (*insistingly*).— But how did she get up here, mamma?

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, I don't know, dear. You should read what Marusia is writing about the hungry little ones. 'Mamma dear, give us a

piece of bread,' they would cry. Mamma goes out to hunt for some bread — how she gets it is not worth while telling — but when she got back the poor child was dead.

Petia.— Let them die. Joseph, you seem very sad to-day.

Luntz.— Yes, Petia, I am feeling bad. Oh, it is such a strange night; can't understand what is the matter with it. A night full of visions. Have you looked at the stars to-night?

Petia.—And I, on the contrary, feel perfectly happy! (*Plays some gay tune on the piano.*)

Verchovtzeff (*to Petia*).— Stop that!

Petia (*singing and playing*).— I am so merry!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Petia dear, stop it, please.

(PETIA *noisily closes the piano and rushes out on the porch.*)

Luntz.— Will Treitch soon return?

Verchovtzeff.— They did not succeed; therefore he may come at any time. Zhitoff, why are you so silent?

Zhitoff.— Don't know; don't feel like talking to-day.

Luntz.—Oh, I have such unpleasant thoughts! such unpleasant thoughts! One feels like committing suicide!

Verchovtzeff.— Nonsense. Astronomers never commit suicide.

Luntz.— I am a poor astronomer, very, very poor, indeed.

Anna.— So much the better; then you may occupy yourself with something more useful.

Luntz.— I fear the stars to-night. I sit and think; how huge and indifferent they are, and they don't seem to care a bit for us,— and I feel so small, so insignificant — just like a chick that hid himself in a corner during the Jewish massacre; there it sits, not understanding what is going on (PETIA *entering*).

Verchovtzeff.— The stars — and the Jewish massacre — what a peculiar combination!

Inna Alexandrovna (*warningly motioning her head to Verchovtzeff*).— We have all undergone a severe nervous strain lately — and it is no wonder you are moody. Just think of it; already a month and a half have passed since Marusia went — and no result whatsoever. I am beginning to 'shake' myself, although I am used to all kinds of weather ——

Luntz.—The feathers are spreading all around, the window panes are crackling, but he remains sitting, and what is he thinking about?

Verchovtzeff.— He is thinking of nothing. He thinks it is snowing.

Luntz.— I fear infinity. What endless space. Why infinity? Here I am looking at the stars; one, ten, a million — there is no end. My God! To whom shall I complain?

Verchovtzeff.— Why complain?

Luntz.— Here I am a little Jew. (*Paces the room, nervously gesticulating.*)

Pollock (*entering*).— Good morning, gentlemen! May I join your company? Hope I am not intruding ——

Inna Alexandrovna.— Why certainly! make yourself comfortable.

Pollock.— The magnetic arrow is oscillating very much, Luntz. We must make some observation of the sun to-morrow [LUNTZ *is muttering something*]. You, Zhitoff, have probably given up the idea of working altogether, so there is no use in talking to you about it. Are you going to leave us?

Zhitoff.— Yes, in a couple of days.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But you don't mean that? Didn't you say, Vassily Vassilievitch, that you were going to wait until Nicholas got back? And why have you changed your mind so suddenly?

Zhitoff.— Oh, I must go. Have been hanging around here too long!

Verchovtzeff.— The place will get more lonesome after you go. Why don't you send your Zealand to the devil?

Zhitoff.— No, I must go.

Anna.— How is it that you are not working, Mr. Pollock?

Pollock.— I am in a dreamy mood to-day, esteemed Anna Sergeievna. I am just thirty-two years old to-day — this very minute. I was born in the evening, 10.37 P. M. Making some allowance for time (*looks at his watch*) I get exactly 10.16 — ten hours sixteen minutes.

Verchovtzeff.— Congratulate you!

Pollock.— At my age of thirty-two I think I have done a great deal for science; have also a name. However, I don't care to go into details. In a word, I already have a right to think of myself.

Verchovtzeff.— What? are you really going to get married? That's the boy!

Pollack.— Yes, you are right. I'll soon be married.

Inna Alexandrovna.— That's right; you are doing the right thing, dear boy. I only hope you'll get a good wife.

Pollock.— My bride is graduating from the university this year, and pretty soon, esteemed Inna Alexandrovna, your comfortable house is going to miss me.

Inna Alexandrovna.— How secretive! The rascal never dropped a word!

Petia (*harshly*).— I'll soon be married, too. I have already a bride — she is a beauty!

Pollock.— Indeed? You are joking?

Inna Alexandrovna.— Petia! (PETIA *giggles and goes out on the porch*).

Anna.— What is the matter with him? I can't understand his conduct lately.

Inna Alexandrovna.—I don't know what to think of it myself. He has changed ever since you arrived here. Josiph Abramovitch, you are always with him. Can you tell us what is the matter with him? I am really getting anxious about him.

Luntz.— Petia,— why he is a good boy, he is an honest boy. He, too, is haunted by some disagreeable thoughts.

Pollock.— Go on, gentlemen, don't you see I am in a peculiar mood to-day and will gladly listen to your discussions?

Luntz (*muttering*).— The stars, the stars!

Pollock.— What can you tell us about the stars, dear Luntz?

Luntz.—Then too they were shining way above the clouds; while we were sitting, waiting and thinking that ours have gained a complete victory,— and they are shining now. One is likely to go mad.

Verchovtzeff.— Work! we must work; and here in this devilish hole one is chained like a dog. The deuce! (*Limps about the room, making for the window, looks through the window for a few minutes and goes back.*) I think Treitch is coming.

Pollock.— I like Treitch very much. He seems to be a very nice gentleman.

Inna Alexandrovna.— That means failure again!

Verchovtzeff (*roughly*).— What else did you expect? Didn't they write you it wasn't a success?

Inna Alexandrovna.—Oh, merciful Father! Kolushka, dear! Kolushka, my own! I don't think I'll ever see you again. . . . My heart tells me that . . . (*weeping*).

Treitch (*entering, greeting all and seating himself*).— Good evening, folks.

Inna Alexandrovna.— You are probably tired, my dear boy; are you hungry?

Treitch.— No, thank you. I had some lunch on my way here.

Verchovtzeff.— Anything new?

Treitch.— Numerous arrests. You of course all know that. Zanko was hanged.

All.— Is that possible? Zanko? No. When was that?

Verchovtzeff.— Poor fellow! How is he? . . .

Inna Alexandrovna.— He was so young! . . . Wasn't he here with Kolushka last year? Dark complexioned with small mustaches.

Anna.— Yes, he was.

Inna Alexandrovna.— He kissed my hand. . . . He was so young. Has he a mother?

Anna.— Oh, mamma!— Do you know, Treitch, if he disclosed any of the secrets?

Treitch.— He met his fate like a hero, but they acted disgracefully mean towards him. He asked them to give his lawyer permission to be present at the execution. They granted the request, but never kept their promise. And all he saw at the last were the face of the hangman and a few stars . . . (*silence*).

Luntz.— Stars! Stars!

Treitch.— In Ternach the soldiers killed some two hundred workmen, also many women and children. In the Sternburg district famine is raging. There is a rumor abroad that some have eaten human corpses.

Verchovtzeff.— You are the black messenger, Treitch.

Treitch.— In Poland Jewish massacres have broken out.

Luntz.— What, again?

Pollock.— What barbarism! what foolish people!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, it may only be a rumor. A good many stories are circulating ——

Verchovtzeff.— But what about ours?

Treitch (*shrugging his shoulders*).— Well, I am going there to-morrow.

Anna.— They'll hang you, too. That's what you'll get. We must wait.

Verchovtzeff.— I am going with you! The deuce take it all.

Anna.— But how can you go with these feet of yours? Bethink yourself, Valentine; you are not a child.

Verchovtzeff.— Oh! ——

Treitch.— How are your feet, anyhow?

Anna.— Bad!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Anything concerning Kolushka?

Treitch.— No one showed up at the appointed hour and of course I understood that the affair had been posponed. I don't know what to make of it myself. I am going there to-morrow.

Inna Alexandrovna.—May God help you, my dear boy. Let me bless you as I would my own son. (TREITCH *kisses her hand.*)

Pollock (*to* ZHITOFF).— Just think of it, a common workman and how well bred. I am certainly surprised.

Zhitoff.— Y-yes.

Pollock.— And what I like about him is the way he relates things; he is so clear and concise.

Luntz (*shouting*).— Have you heard?

Anna.— What is the matter with you? What are you screaming about? You scared me.

Luntz.— Again! Again they are killing fathers and mothers; again they are tearing children to pieces. Oh, I felt it . . . I knew it to-day, when I looked at the cursed stars!

Pollock.— Dear Luntz, calm yourself.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Why did you say that, Treitch?

Treitch.— Oh, that's nothing.

Luntz.— I don't want to be calm, and I am not going to be! I have been calm long enough. I was quiet when they killed my father, my mother, and my sister! I was quiet when they were slaughtering my brothers at the barricades! Oh, I have been quiet too long. But I am quiet now, too. Am I not, Treitch? — Everything then is in vain?

Treitch.— No, we are going to win.

Luntz.— Treitch, I loved science. Pollock, I loved science. When I was small, so small that all the boys on the street abused me —then already I loved science. When they were beating me I used to think, Never mind, when I grow up I shall become a famous scientist and will be a credit to my family. My dear father, who spent the last farthing on me, my dear mother, who wept over me —Oh, how I loved science!

Pollock.— I am very sorry for you, Luntz. I esteem you very much.

Luntz.— When hungry, when thirsty, when running around in the street like a dog, hunting for a crust,— I was thinking of science. And when I was bitterly crying, tearing my hair from my head, after they had killed my father, my mother, and my sister,— I was thinking of science! But now (*whispering*) I hate science (*shouts*). No more science! Down with science!

Pollock.— Luntz, Luntz! I am very sorry ——

Anna.— Why don't you try to control yourself? You can't go on in that way. You are getting hysterical.

Luntz.— Aha! Hysterics! Well, what of it? But I am quiet, and you only imagine that I am not quiet. I don't care for science any more. I am going to quit this place. I am going to quit it. Do you hear?

Treitch.— Come with me.

Luntz.— Yes, I'll go with you. I don't want any more science. Cursed stars. Again, again! I can hear them shout up there! you don't hear that,

but I do! And I can also see all those that were burnt, that were murdered, that were torn to pieces. Murdered — because they gave birth to a Christ, to the prophets, and to a Mary. I see them. They gaze at me through the window — these cold, mutilated corpses; they are standing above my head while I am asleep and they ask me, 'Are you going to follow science, Luntz?' No! No!

Inna Alexandrovna.— My dear boy, may God help you!

Luntz.— Yes, God. I am a Jew and therefore I appeal to the God of the Jews; God of Vengeance, Lord God of Vengeance, reveal yourself! Rise, O Judge of the Earth, and render vengeance to the proud and the wicked. God of Vengeance! Lord God of Vengeance! Reveal yourself!

Verchovtzeff.— Vengeance to the hangmen!

(LUNTZ *shakes his fist silently and departs.*)

Treitch.— What do you think of him?

Pollock.— What an unfortunate young man. It is so painful when one likes science and is unable to follow it. I was so happy, but when he began to talk on this subject I couldn't keep from crying, esteemed Inna Alexandrovna.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Don't talk about it. My heart is breaking. Will this misery ever end? I don't think I'll ever see a bright day in all my life. What life!

Zhitoff.— Painful, indeed.

(TREITCH *takes* VERCHOVTZEFF *aside and cautiously pointing to* INNA ALEXANDROVNA *whispers something to him;* VERCHOVTZEFF *draws his head back and utters loudly*).

Verchovtzeff.— I don't believe it. Nicholas!

Treitch.— t-ss (*whispering*).

Pollock.— Let us have hope in God, esteemed Inna Alexandrovna. Not the God, however, of Vengeance, whom the unfortunate Luntz has mentioned, but the God of Love and Mercy.

Zhitoff.— Yes, there are different gods and they are used for different purposes.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Oh, children! A great misfortune has befallen us! (SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH *enters, greeting*).

Sergius.— You are here, too, Pollock?

Pollock.— To-day is my birthday, esteemed Sergius Nikolaievitch.

Sergius.— I congratulate you (*shakes his hand*).

Pollock.— I have also had the honor to-day to inform my friends of my engagement to Miss Fanny Herstrem.

Sergius.— I didn't know you were such a lucky fellow.

Pollock.— I am going to have a companion, now, esteemed Sergius Nikolaievitch (*laughs*).

Sergius.— Once more let me congratulate you. By the way, is there anything new concerning Nicholas?

Pollock.— It appears that the escape has been postponed.

Verchovtzeff.— If you only knew what was going on upon the earth, esteemed star-gazer!

Sergius.— Well? Again some misfortune?

Verchovtzeff.— Yes — Earthly vanity. (*Bends his head on one side.*) When I look at you thus, I can't help asking you: Have you any friends, or are you alone in this world?

Sergius (*pointing to* INNA ALEXANDROVNA).— There is my friend.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Don't make me blush, Sergius Nikolaievitch — you know you need a different friend.

Verchovtzeff.— That's all right. Who else?

Sergius.— I have others, too, but, just imagine! I have never seen them. One lives in South Africa, he has an observatory; another — in Brazil; and a third — I don't know where.

Verchovtzeff.— Why? Did he vanish?

Sergius.— He died a hundred and fifty years ago. I have still another one, but this one I don't know at all, although I like him very much. He isn't born yet. He will be born approximately seven hundred and fifty years hence, and I have already authorized him to examine some of my observations.

Verchovtzeff.— And are you sure he'll do it?

Sergius.— Yes.

Verchovtzeff.— What a strange collection. You ought to donate it to some museum! Don't you think so, Treitch?

Treitch.— I like Mr. Ternovsky's friends.

(PETIA *enters hurriedly, looks around.*)

Petia.— Where is Luntz? Are all here? Good! Where is Luntz?

Inna Alexandrovna.— He must be in his room, Petia; go in and entertain him; he is so nervous and excited to-day.

Petia.— Gentlemen, kindly remain where you are; I am going to arrange some little entertainment; it is not out of place to-day.

Pollock.— Probably fireworks? Eh? Oh, you shrewd boy! But it is rather out of place even to-day.

Petia.— I'll be back directly (*exit* PETIA).

Sergius (*pacing slowly*).— How is the barometer to-day, Pollock?

Pollock.— Very low, esteemed Sergius Nikolaievitch.

Sergius.— Yes, one feels it.

Pollock.— Judging from the oscillation of the arrow there must be a cyclone in southern latitudes.

Sergius.— Yes. It is not quiet.

Anna (*to* INNA ALEXANDROVNA).— Petia must be up to some mischief again, mamma, you ought not to encourage these things.

Inna Alexandrovna.— But what can I do with him? You see yourself that he ——

Verchovtzeff (*going with* TREITCH *to the table*).— Oh, how devilish quiet it is here — like the grave.

Sergius.— You think so? It seems to me it is rather noisy down here.

Treitch (*to* VERCHOVTZEFF).— Remember if I don't return, you'll tell her that ——

Verchovtzeff.— I understand. Oh, how close it is!

Anna.— And I think it is rather cool.

Verchovtzeff.— Close, cool — the same devil. If I am to stay here another week ——

Pollock.— Gentlemen, let us select for our discussion some topic in which all could participate. Our chairman is going to be ——

Luntz (*entering*).— Who was calling me? You, Sergius Nikolaievitch?

Sergius.— No.

Luntz.— Why did Petia tell me so, then? (*Starts to go out.*)

Pollock.— Remain here, dear Luntz. Now, since you have calmed yourself down a little, let me tell you that I don't agree with your views concerning science.

Luntz.— Oh, let me alone! Sergius Nikolaievitch, let me tell you tha I am going to quit the observatory (PETIA'S *voice is heard outside the room:* "*Pages fling the door widely open for the duchess!*")

Pollock (*laughing*).— Oh, that's Petia. What a mischievous boy! Listen, Listen!

(*The door is flung open;* PETIA *enters with the old woman. She is almost doubled up and can hardly walk.— An awful spectacle of poverty, old age, and wretchedness.* PETIA, *arm in arm with her, steps forward solemnly. At the door stand* MINNA, FRANTZ, *and other servants, smiling.*)

Petia.— Gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you my pretty bride. Helen.

Verchovtzeff (*laughing roughly*).—What a fool!

Anna.— Didn't I tell you?

Pollock (*getting up*).— This is an insult! I will not allow him to insult my bride!

Petia (*loud*).— Pretty Helen, bow to the audience (*the old woman makes a bow*).

Pollock.— I protest! It is an insult.

Inna Alexandrovna.— He is only joking. Petia dear, you must not poke fun at old people; it is not nice.

Luntz.— Oh, no, it isn't a joke! I understand! Oh, oh, I understand!

Petia.— There. Now, let's have a talk, pretty Helen. How old are you? (*The old woman does not reply, only shakes her head.*) Did you say seventeen? You are seventeen years old, pretty maiden. Do your parents — the Duke and the Duchess consent to your marriage? (*The old woman does not reply — only shakes her head*).

Pollock.— Esteemed Sergius Nikolaievitch, I am being insulted in your own house——

Luntz (*almost crazed*).— What do you want? Who cares for your idiotic bride?

Pollock.— Mr. Luntz, I'll hold you responsible for these words!

Luntz.— The stars, the stars!

Petia.— How happy am I, pretty Helen! Can you smell the odor of roses? Do you hear the music of the nightingale in the garden? He is eulogizing our love, pretty Helen.

Luntz.— Cursed stars.

Petia.— Your fragrant little mouth, pretty Helen——

Luntz.— Yes, yes!

Petia.— Your pearly teeth ——

Luntz.— Yes, yes! ——

Petia.— Your dainty face — I am desperately in love with you, pretty Helen! Why have you cast down your enchanted eyes so modestly?

Luntz.— Shame! And aren't you ashamed of yourself, Pollock? Science! And do you see that? That's my mother, that's my mother!

Pollock.— I don't understand.

Petia.— Raise your beautiful head and proudly proclaim yourself my bride, enchanting Helen. In your embrace, my restless soul will find everlasting peace! (*The old woman's head is shaking.*)

Anna.— They are all fit for an insane asylum.

Verchovtzeff (*frightened*).— Anna, keep still!

Pollock.— This is a kind of——

Luntz.— Hold your tongue, bourgeois! — or I'll — She is my mother. (*to the old woman*). Old woman! (*pushes away* PETIA). Listen to me. Here I am on my knees before you. You are my mother, and let me — let me kiss your hand ——

Petia (*shouting*).— She is my bride!

Luntz.— She is my mother! Let her alone!

Anna.— Water!

Luntz.— Old woman! Forgive me! I loved science, foolish Jew!

Verchovtzeff (*to* TREITCH).— Something must be done!

Treitch.— Never mind.

Luntz.— I love only you now, dear old woman. Take my head and my heart. Oh, cursed stars! Damned stars!

Treitch.— Are you going with me, Luntz?

Petia (*shouting*).— She is my bride.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Merciful God! Petia dear! He is fainting.

Anna.— Water!

Luntz.— I am going with you. And I swear by God ——

Verchovtzeff.— Will you ever shut up?

(PETIA *is writhing with convulsions.* *All, save* TREITCH, *rush up to him.* SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH *makes a few steps but stops and looks at Luntz.*)

Luntz (*on his knees*).— Old woman, you see! I am crying, old woman; I am a little Jew who loved science. You are my mother, and I swear by God to devote all my time to you, my dear old woman, I am crying — cursed stars!

ACT IV

On the right the observatory dome, the larger part of which is visible from the stage; the dome is surrounded by a gallery with an iron railing; the lower part of the stage — some portion of a roof joined to the main structure of the observatory, and a faint view of the mountains; the rest — a vast portion of the night sky; constellations; inside the dome — complete darkness; to the left are faintly visible the outlines of a huge refracting telescope; two tables upon which stand two lamps with dark, non-transparent globes.

The shutter of the dome is open, through which is visible the starry sky; a staircase leading to the dome; silence; the monotonous tick of the metronome. SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH, POLLOCK, *and* PETIA.

Pollock.— And so, esteemed Sergius Nikolaievitch, you'll kindly watch the camera. I must go and finish my tables.

Sergius.— Go on, keep on working. Good by.

Pollock (*addressing* PETIA).— Well, how are we feeling to-day, young priest of the Goddess Uranus?

Petia.— All right, thanks.

Pollock.— And we are not going to poke any more fun at poor Pollock for being anxious to get married?

Petia.— Upon my word, I didn't wish ——

Pollock.— I understand, I understand ——

Sergius.— He was already indisposed then ——

Pollock.— I am only joking, esteemed Sergius Nikolaievitch. Strangely enough, I have discovered a great deal of humor in myself lately. When Frantz spilled some milk the other day I said to him, 'Frantz, you are leaving behind you a milky way,' and he laughed very much (*laughing*). But I don't care to go into details. Good by. (*Exit.*)

Petia.— What a funny fellow Pollock is. Papa, shall I disturb you if I remain up here?

Sergius.— No, my boy.

Petia.— I don't feel like going downstairs. It is so lonesome down there now. You know we have received a telegram from Zhitoff; it came from Cairo. He wrote: 'I am sitting gazing at the pyramids.' Have you ever seen the pyramids?

Sergius.— I am afraid mamma will miss you, Petia.

Petia.— She is sleeping now. But I spend a great deal of time with her throughout the day. She worries a great deal about Nicholas, papa.

Sergius.— But nothing is known yet. Has Anna written anything?

Petia.— No. She does not like to write letters. Of course nothing is known yet, and I keep on telling that to mother, but you know how difficult it is to argue with women — I don't want to disturb you. Are you, too, going to do some calculations now?

Sergius.— Yes, some. I am rather tired.

Petia.— And I am going to read awhile. By the way, papa, I was reading in some journal yesterday that you have made some very important discovery in relation to the nebulæ, and that that places you on a level with ——

Sergius.— The discovery, my boy, was made by me some ten years ago. Astronomical fame comes rather late. Very few are interested in astronomy and astronomers.

Petia.— And I did not know it!

Sergius.— We still remain isolated, like the Egyptian priests, although against our will.

Petia.— How foolish! Papa, why did you order me brought up here when I was ill? I certainly must have disturbed you?

Sergius.— No. But if anything becomes precious to me — I always like to lift it up here. I have a very funny notion, Petia: I think that here, among the stars, there can be no suffering, no disease.

Petia.— Once, one night I woke up and saw you looking at the stars.

Silence reigned all around and you were looking at the stars. And then I comprehended something — nay, I felt it. I don't know what, I am unable to explain. I felt as though we were alone in this world: you, the stars, and I, as if we were already dead. But I did not have any apprehension; on the contrary, I felt good, tranquil, and pure. I have such a desire to live now — but why! I don't understand the meaning of life, old age, and death any more than I did before. However, go on with your work, papa; I am not going into details, as Pollock would put it.

Sergius.— Yes, man thinks only of his life and his death — hence he is so apprehensive toward life, and weary and lonesome,— like a lost flea in a vault. In order to fill out this awful emptiness he invents much that is beautiful and is powerful, but in his creations he only thinks of his death and of his life. And he resembles a keeper of a museum of wax figures,— yes, a keeper of a museum of wax figures. During the day he chats with his visitors and collects money from them, and when night comes he wanders lonely, full of fright, amid death, among the soulless and the lifeless. If he only knew that life is everywhere!

Petia.— Do you know what frightened me once? Why, only a simple chair. I saw once a chair in an empty room, and suddenly I got so frightened that I screamed!

Sergius.— Man's thought is an eagle — the mighty and powerful king of space, but he has tied its wings and put it in a poultry yard with wire and shamelessly lying walls. And the sky peeping through the wire netting is only teasing and irritating it, and it quarrels with the other birds, thus getting dull and stupid, instead of soaring to the skies.

Petia.— Poor bird!

Sergius.— Yes, all is endowed with life. And when man comprehends that,— he'll grow to be happy like the Greek, like the heathen. Once more the nymphs will appear upon the earth, again will the elves dance in the moonlight. Man will walk through the woods conversing with the trees, with the flowers. He will never be alone, for all is endowed with life; metals, the stones, the trees.

Petia (*laughing*).— You are very funny, papa!

Sergius.— But why?

Petia.— You are so polite with the chairs, yes, it's true; and you are polite with all objects. When you take some object into your hand — you do it so carefully,—I don't know how to explain myself. You are very absent minded, but you walk so cleverly that you never stumble over things; you never run into or drop anything. When the chairs, the cupboard, and the tumblers gather together in the night, as in Andersen's fairy tale, to have a talk with each other — they probably praise you very much.

Sergius.— You think so? Then I am very glad the chairs do talk.

Petia.— And here when you leave, what takes place? Most likely everything sings.

Sergius.— Everything sings in my presence, too.

Petia.— The chimney in a basso voice? Yes?

Sergius.— Do you know, my boy, that the stars sing?

Petia.— No.

Sergius.— Yes, they sing, and their melody is as mysterious as eternity itself. Whosoever has but once heard that melody, issuing from the depth of unfathomed regions, becomes the son of eternity! The son of eternity! — yes, Petia, thus will man be called in the future.

Petia (*laughing*).— Papa dear, don't get angry; do you mean to say that Pollock, too, is the son of eternity?

Sergius.— Maybe.

Petia.— But he is such a fool, so narrow minded. No, no! I won't say anything else. I am going to sit down. There is a peculiar air in here. The air of our rooms is different. You are still meditating, papa?

Sergius.— Yes, my boy.

Petia.— Well, go on meditating. And I am reading (*silence*). To-day it is exactly three weeks since Luntz left us.

Sergius.— Is it?

(*Silence;* PETIA *is reading.* SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH *awakens from his revery and starts working.*)

Petia.— During the first nights, while I was having that fever, I used to fear the refractor very much. It would move along the circle tracing some star. Once when I opened my eyes and looked at it, it appeared to me like a huge, dark eye — with a long coat on ——

(*Silence.* SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH *stops working and supporting his chin on his hand is musing again. Down below a few plaintive strains of music are heard: 'I am sitting behind iron walls in the prison dark.'*)

Petia (*leaping up*).— What is that music? Who can it be? There is no one down there but mamma.

Sergius (*turning around*).— Yes, maybe it is Marusia.

Petia (*shouting*).— Marusia has come! I'll be back in a minute! (*Runs down.*)

(PETIA *and* MARUSIA *appear on the staircase leading to the dome.*)

Marusia.— Stop crying. What is the use? You'd better go to mamma (PETIA *is weeping, restraining himself from sobbing*). Go, Petia, go! She is alone. You must comfort her — you are a man!

Petia.— And you?

Marusia.— Never mind. Go! (*Kisses him on the head. They go off in different directions.*)

Sergius.— Marusia dear, how glad I am to see you again. You don't believe— I know — that I can feel too. I have been thinking of your coming all day to-day.

Marusia.— How do you do, Sergius Nikolaievitch? Are you working?

Sergius.— How is Nicholas? Has he escaped from prison?

Marusia.— Yes. He has left the prison.

Sergius.— Is he here?

Marusia.— No.

Sergius.— But he is out of danger, Marusia!

Marusia.— Yes.

Sergius. — Poor Marusia! You are probably so tired. I have been thinking of you all day long — of you and of him — I don't dare to talk about you — you are like music. Marusia! I am so glad! Allow me to kiss your hands — your gentle and delicate hands that had to handle so many iron locks and rusty gratings (*kisses her hands ceremoniously*).

Marusia (*pointing to the gallery of the dome*).— Let's go there.

Sergius.— I am so glad — I'll fetch a chair for you — you are so tired, Marusia (*both go out on the gallery*). There, sit down. Isn't it nice out here?

Marusia.— Yes, very nice, indeed!

Sergius.— I have been sitting here with Petia; he is such a nice boy. He is reminding me of Nicholas lately ——

Marusia.— Yes.

Sergius.— Petia is so feminine, so frail, and I am very anxious about him at times. But Nicholas — he is so daring and full of energy! How harmonious and well shaped everything is in him; how tender and how strong! He is an excellent specimen of manliness, a rare beautiful form which nature shatters, in order not to have any repetitions.

Marusia.— Yes, shatters. I was going to say ——

Sergius.— He is as captivating as a young god, he has a charm which no one can withstand. He is beloved by everybody, Marusia — even by Anna — even by Anna. And he is so handsome. It may seem ridiculous to you, Marusia; he reminds me of the starry heaven — the starry heaven at dawn.

Marusia.— Yes, the starry heaven at dawn.

Sergius.— He couldn't help escaping. Of that I was quite sure. Prison! What is a prison — these rusty locks and stupid rotten gratings! I wonder how they could have kept him thus long. They should have smiled and cleared the way for him — as to a young happy prince!

(MARUSIA *falls on her knees in despair.*)

Marusia.— Oh, father, father, how terrible!

Sergius.— What! what's happened, Marusia?

Marusia.— Shattered is the beautiful form! Shattered is the beautiful form, father!

Sergius.— Is he dead? Oh, why don't you speak?

Marusia.— He — his reason has left him. (*Silence. Leaping up.*) What is it? Cursed life! Where is the God of that life? Whither is he looking? Cursed life. It's better to exhaust oneself with tears, to die, to depart! What's the use of living when the best perish? When the beautiful form is shattered! Do you understand it, father? Life isn't worth living, it isn't worth while living.

Sergius.— Tell me all about it.

Marusia.— What for? Do you think it possible to tell that? To be able to tell it — one must comprehend it. And do you think one can comprehend it?

Sergius.— Go on.

Marusia.— He has been my banner. When the barbarians threw him into prison — I thought: You are but barbarians — but he is the sun. I thought: Pretty soon all that are like him will rise and shatter the prison walls, and my sun will shine once more! my sun!

Sergius.— How did it happen?

Marusia.— How is a star extinguished? How does a bird die in captivity? He ceased singing, grew pale and sad, but kept on comforting me. Only once he said: 'I can't understand the iron grating. What is an iron grating? It is between me and the sky.'

Sergius.— Between me and the sky?

Marusia.— And just at this time they beat him unmercifully. The prisoners raised a little mutiny and the result was that the keepers forced the doors open and beat them one by one. They beat them with their fists, they trampled upon them with their feet. They beat them terribly and for a long time — these stupid, cold-blooded beasts. And they did not spare your son, either. When I saw him his face was something awful. The dear, beautiful face that used to smile to the whole world! They had torn his mouth — the beautiful lips that had never uttered a falsehood. Had nearly gouged his eyes out — the eyes that saw only the beautiful. Do you understand that, father? Do you approve of it?

Sergius.— Go on.

Marusia.— Already in prison there awakened in him this terrible, deadly melancholy. He didn't blame anybody; he even defended the keepers — his murderers. But the black anguish grew larger and larger. His soul was dying. But he kept soothing and pacifying me, and once he said to me, 'I carry within my soul the sorrow of the whole world.'

Sergius.— Go on.

Marusia.— First his memory began to fail him; then he ceased talking. He would come out silent, would remain so while I would talk to him, and go away silently. His eyes grew larger and darker, as if they contained within them the anguish of all the world — and father, such beauty I have never beheld before! When I went to see him to-day — he had already been taken to the hospital. When they took him out for a walk yesterday — he wanted to throw himself out through the window, but he was caught in time. Then — madness, the straight jacket — and that's all.

Sergius.— Have you seen him?

Marusia.— Yes, I saw him. But I am not going to say anything about it. I can't. Shattered is the beautiful form!

Sergius.— They have ever stoned their prophets.

Marusia.— Father! But how can one live among these who slay their prophets? Whither shall I go! I can't stand it any longer. I can no longer look at man's countenance — it frightens me! Man's countenance — how terrible! Man's countenance! I have cried out all my tears already. The same anguish ahead of me! The last mortal anguish. You see — I am quiet. Look how many stars! (*A pause.*)

Sergius.— Does Inna know it?

Marusia.— Yes.

Sergius.— What do the doctors say?

Marusia.— They say: An idiot.

Sergius.— Nicholas — an idiot?

Marusia.— Yes. He'll live long; he'll grow indifferent; will eat and drink lots; will grow stout. Yes, he'll live long. He'll be happy ——

Sergius.— Nicholas — an idiot! How difficult it is to imagine that. This beautiful man, this harmonious, luminous spirit plunged into darkness, into wearisome, miserable, barely movable chaos. He must have grown ugly now, Marusia?

Marusia (*bitterly*).— Yes, he is ugly. Do you care?

Sergius.— I am glad that you are so calm. I didn't think you were so strong.

Marusia.— Day after day for—for a whole month, I have been undergoing this continuous strain and torture. I have grown used to it. What is habit, father? It must be a kind of insanity too ——

Sergius.— What are you going to do now?

Marusia.— I don't know. I haven't thought of it yet. I would be ashamed of myself, father, to think of my life, my new life, when the grave is so fresh in my memory. It takes some time even for a dog to forget her dead pups.

Sergius.— I shall take care of Nicholas now, he needs but very little, and you, Marusia, must not go to see him. Don't go at all.

Marusia.— No, sir, I am going to do it.

Sergius.— That's scoffing; that's not right, any more than it would be to keep a corpse in one's room. Corpses are to be destroyed by fire.

Marusia.— I would even keep a corpse in my room.

Sergius.— What for?

Marusia.— Do you know pretty Helen? Well, I am going to take her with me.

Sergius.— Are you against anybody?

Marusia.— I don't know,— against you.

Sergius.— Against me?

Marusia.— Yes, I have hit it; I know what I am going to do now. I shall build a city and shall people it with all the old, like pretty Helen, with all the wretched and the crippled, the insane, and the blind. There shall also be there the deaf and dumb, the lepers and the palsied. I am also going to have murderers ——

Sergius.— I am sorry for you, Marusia.

Marusia.— I am also going to people it with traitors and liars, and creatures like man, but more terrible than beasts. And the houses will resemble the dwellers therein — crooked, hunchbacked, blind, diseased; dwellings of murderers and traitors. And they will collapse upon the heads of those who will occupy them. They will lie and stifle with ease. And we are going to have constant murders, famine, and mourning. I shall appoint as king Judas Iscariot, and I shall name the city 'To the stars!'

Sergius.— Poor Marusia, I am very sorry for you.

Marusia.— You are not sorry for your son.

Sergius.— I have no children. All human beings are alike to me.

Marusia.— How heartless. No, I shall never understand you.

Sergius.— This is because I think of all. I think of the past, also of the future. I think of the earth and the stars — of all, and in the mist of the past I can see myriads that have perished, and in the mist of the future I can also see myriads of those who are going to perish; and I see the Cosmos, and I see everywhere about me endless rejoicing life — therefore I cannot mourn the loss of one!

(Inna Alexandrovna *and* Petia *appear on the staircase. She walks with difficulty, supporting herself on* Petia. *They slowly pass through the dome.*)

Inna Alexandrovna (*throwing herself upon her husband*).— Our Kolushka, Kolushka! ——

Sergius (*makes her sit down gently, straightens out and shouts*).— They robbed us of our son! Imbeciles; fools; raising their own hands upon themselves.

Inna Alexandrovna.— It's nothing, papa. We'll manage to get along. Kolushka dear, Kolushka ——

Sergius.— They would extinguish the sun if they could reach it — so as to die in darkness. They took our son away! They took him away. They have taken our light away. (*Stamps with his foot.* PETIA *and* MARUSIA *crying, fall on their knees and are caressing* INNA ALEXANDROVNA. SERGIUS NIKOLAIEVITCH *walks off a few paces and returns.*)

Marusia.— Forgive me, father.

Sergius.— You must not cry. You mustn't. We possess thought; we possess reason. Oh, do help us! Yes, I am probably getting old.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Kolushka!

Sergius.— That's nothing. Life, life is everywhere. Just at this moment — yes at this very moment! Somebody is born; it may be a Nicholas,— nay, better than he, for nature does not repeat herself.

Marusia.— Is born to go mad, to perish. Is born only to be mourned by his mother. Is that what you want to say?

Sergius.— Life, like a gardener, cuts off the best flowers,— but their fragrance fills the earth. . . . Look there; into that infinite space, into that inexhaustible ocean of creative energy. Look, how peaceful. But if you could only hear through space and see through eternity — you would perhaps die with, perhaps be inflamed with joy. With cold frenzy, obedient to the iron will of gravitation, countless worlds whirl around in space along their orbits — and over them all there rules but one great, one immortal spirit.

Marusia (*getting up*).— Don't talk to me about a God.

Sergius.— I talk of a creature like ourselves, who is also suffering and thinking, also searching and seeking. I don't know him, but I like him as a friend, as a comrade.

When at the casual meeting of two mysterious powers the first life flamed up, the tiny, infinitesimal life of the amoeba, protoplasm,—already at that moment these huge, luminous bodies had found their master. This is — we who are here and those who are there.

Mighty space of heaven! ancient mystery! you are above my head, you are within my soul, and you are also at my feet,— at the feet of your master!

Marusia.— It is silent, father! It laughs at you!

Sergius.— Yes, but I *will* — and it speaks!

Thither, into that ocean blue, my searching glance I send forth, and gliding from space to space it comprehends and conceives things which no man has ever seen.

I call — and from the darkest crevices of the earth crawl forth, obedient to my command, trembling mystery. She writhes from fear and anger, she threatens me with her bifurcated tongue, blinks her blind eyes — powerless, pitiful monster,— and then I rejoice, and I say unto space and time: ' Hail to you, son of eternity! Hail to you, my unknown, distant friend! '

Marusia.— But death, madness, and the wild orgy of slaves? Father, I cannot leave this earth; I don't want to leave it. She is so unfortunate. She breathes anguish and horror — but she gave me life, and I carry in my blood her sufferings and her sorrows, and like a wounded bird, my soul is ever falling towards the earth.

Sergius.— There is no death.

Marusia.— And Nicholas? And your son?

Sergius.— He is in you, he is in Petia, he is in me — he is in all of us, who keep sacred the fragrance of his soul. Is Giordano Bruno dead?

Marusia.—He was great.

Sergius.— Only beasts die, for they have no soul. Only those die who murder, but the murdered, the tortured, the burnt,— these live forever. Man is immortal! there is no death for the Son of eternity!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Kolushka! Kolushka!

Sergius.— In the temples of the ancients an everlasting fire was kept. The wood turned into ashes, the oil burned up, but the flame was kept up forever.

Don't you feel it here,— everywhere? Don't you feel within you its pure flame? Who gave you this gentle soul? Whose thought that flew out from some mortal body is abiding within you? Can you say that that is your thought? Your soul is but an altar upon which the Son of eternity is performing divine services. (*Holding out his arms towards the stars.*) Hail to you, to you, my unknown, my distant friend!

Marusia.— I shall go forth into life.

Sergius.— Go. Return to life that which you have taken from her. Give back to the sun her warmth. You shall perish as has perished Nicholas and as are perishing all those whose measureless happy souls are destined to support the everlasting fire. But by your death you shall find immortality. To the Stars!

Petia.— You are crying, father. Let me kiss your hands, let me!

Inna Alexandrovna.— Don't. Don't cry, papa. We'll manage to get in — somehow.

Marusia.— I shall go. I shall keep sacred all that has been left of Nicholas — his noble thoughts, his tender love, his gentle soul. Let them again and again kill him within me, but high above my head I shall carry his pure, uncorrupted soul.

Sergius (*holding out his hands towards the stars*).— Hail to you, my unknown, distant friend!

Marusia (*holding down her hands towards the earth*).— I greet thee, my dear, my suffering brother.

Inna Alexandrovna.— Nicholas — Nicholas ——

THE LYRIC ORIGINS OF SWINBURNE

By Van Tyne Brooks

MR. GOSSE has said of Keats that at the time of his death he was 'rapidly progressing towards a crystallization into one fused and perfect style of all the best elements of the poetry of the ages.' It is only because Swinburne's individuality is always the pre-eminent thing, because he somehow submerges and transforms into Swinburne all gifts of phrase and mood, that this may not obviously be applied to him also. He has been sensitive, as a great poet must be, to all the elements of the world's anthology. He has detected all, assimilated all, identified all.

Most preromantic poets were the product of some single school, had some one principal prototype. Milton could hardly have written without Virgil, Dryden without Juvenal, Johnson without Seneca, Congreve without Molière. But scholarship was almost a hindrance to the romanticists. What Sappho might have sung of the passions of life could have no vital literary effect on a Shelley whose own emotions and whose own genius for expression were in such intimate relationship. Mode was cast aside, precedent was of no avail; it was the individual singing to the individual — neither a product of evolution, both essentially primitive. It was thus that Burns found an audience, that Byron threw aside the ideal Greece for the Greece of reality.

Keats was not scholarly enough to apprehend the phrase of other literatures. He interpreted the Greek feeling, without reading a word of the Greek language; he was a Spenserian by instinct, a Provençal by temperament. Browning and Tennyson were reactionaries. The scholarship that returned with them did not, like Johnson's, destroy the poetry: the poetry that was in them, did not, as in Burns, destroy the scholarship. Rather the scholarship and the poetry were co-ordinate and always imperfectly fused.

But Swinburne liquifies and welds both elements. He is a great scholar in the greatest sense — a great *artist* in scholarship. He conceals the traces of midnight oil, he grows more and more human. The whole world of poetry seems to have passed into him, and to have come forth essentially his own. I deny neither Browning's subtler penetration nor Tennyson's extraordinary range of human appeal. But I assert that Swinburne, greater or less than they, is far more typically, more purely a poet.

And this I deduce by the simplest of tests — that whatever element enters his mind comes out poetry. Capable of both, he has been neither dulled by scholarship nor debased by pedantry.

Of all poetical forms, the lyric is the most universal, the most independent of time and place, the most ethereal, the farthest from prose, and consequently the most essential. Narrative is pedestrian, epic racial, satire and epigram merely prose phrased in poetical form for purposes of economy. But Shelley and Sappho might easily change places, since the simple expression of human nature is the one thing stable. It is only in the Eclogues that Virgil exists apart from Rome, only in 'Brignall Banks' that Scott is magical, only in 'Ah, how fair it is to love' that Dryden is not first of all a rather skeptical and virulent writer of compact prose. Sappho might have written any of these, or Shelley, or Swinburne,—and Swinburne is one of the great scholars of literature.

Swinburne transmutes many elements into one. Narrative, drama, epic, satire, with him become song. And this is a characteristic which leads him back to Sappho, the mother of all song. In 'Thalassius' the foundations of Swinburne's nature are transparent. He is a child of the sea, of the winds, of all the elements. He is one with absolute qualities, 'rolled round in Earth's diurnal course,' a thing apart from civilizations and localities, below all superstructure, behind all evolution. Sappho is thus not so much an influence as part with him of the same elements upon which is built up afterwards the framework of their distinct personalities. No words could better express this essential sympathy, too profound for any influence of phrase or idea, than these:

> 'Clear air and wind, and under in clamorous vales
> Fierce noises of the fiery nightingales,
> Sails seen like blown white flowers at sea, and words
> That bring tears swiftest, and long notes of birds
> Violently singing till the whole world sings —
> I, Sappho, shall be one with all these things,
> With all high things forever.'

In 'Thalassius' it is song which has awakened in him the sense of all primary emotions, love, hate, hope, fear. And among those elements all things become equal. In this pantheism the soul may cry out,

> 'God, if thou be God; bird, if bird thou be:'

or to Sappho herself,

> 'O Soul triune, woman and god and bird.'

And then Swinburne says what Sappho has been to him:

> 'Song and the secrets of it, and their might,
> What blessings curse it, and what curses bless,

I know them since my spirit had first in sight
The small dark body's Lesbian loveliness
That held the fire eternal.'

It was in Swinburne's early years of 'Poems and Ballads' that Walt Whitman also became the expression of a new pantheism. In Sappho as in Wordsworth there was the instinctive sense of being identical with nature. But to one who had become in so many ways the product of complex conditions, life could no longer be wholly natural, and there was even a certain violence in this conscious return from the superficial to the fundamental:

'I will go back to the great sweet Mother,
Mother and lover of men, the sea,
I will go down to her, I and none other,
Close with her, kiss her, and mix her with me.'

The sense of identity is gone, and there is the demand for a forced return. In this momentarily decadent touch one sees the turning of the blade, the exquisite difference between the really primitive and that which tries to be once more, the beginning of the circle and the ending, the spirit that came before evolution, the spirit that has come after.

When Swinburne emerges from these elements and assumes more definite intellectual form, it is as the poet of love. And here the decadent tinge is very deep in the poems of his early years. Two lines from 'Anactoria' may be taken to stand for his conception of love at this time:

'Ah, ah, thy beauty! like a beast it bites,
Stings like an adder, like an arrow smites.'

This is neither Sappho nor Swinburne. It is Baudelaire. Frequent and emphatic as this strain is throughout the 'Poems and Ballads,' it is really the distorted view of a partially submerged identity. In 'Felise' we find an experiment in Gautier, the battledore and shuttlecock of half-playful sentiment; the old-rose memories, the lavender regrets. Yet all this tortuous, sinuous anguish of passion, all this stale and soggy counterfeit of love melts and flows again in the heat of more genuine sympathy with Shelley, 'the chalice of love's fire,' Spenser and Landor, Catullus and Burns. For the genius of Swinburne is too white-hot and throbbing to have anything lastingly in common with the work of Baudelaire.

'sick flowers of secrecy and shade,
Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants gray,
Sweet-smelling, pale with poison.'

Now it is in 'Thalassius,' the pinnacle of Swinburne's expression, that we find his final view of love, that

'Should live for love's sake of itself alone,
Though spirit and flesh were one thing doomed and dead.'

And in one of the poems of his later years this poet of vipers and bitings can sing of the love that casts out fear.

More numerous if much less inspired than the love poems, Swinburne's poems on *Man* form another great division of his work. He is a revolutionist of the old French type:

'God, if a God there be, is the substance of men, which is man,'

he cries, adding with a final frenzy,

'Glory to man in the highest! for man is the master of things.

And this doctrine he expands at length, forced by it into anarchy and atheism:

'A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night:
But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might.'

For man contains in himself all that is needful to salvation. For this reason Swinburne is bitterly defiant of all established codes and modes. He is Elijah deriding the prophets of Baal: 'Cry aloud, for your God is a God!' And he always attacks the orthodox in the orthodox phrase. The priests are standing between God and man, he says,

'Because of whom we dare not love thee:
Though hearts reach back and memories ache,
We cannot praise thee for their sake.'

This hatred of priests is allied to his apotheosis of man: and finally bursts out in a whole volume of wild revolutionary chants, the 'Songs before Sunrise,' dedicated to Mazzini and bristling with lavish pæans to 'our prophet and our priest.' In the 'Song of Italy,' a *Benedicite* is recited, exhorting all Italian cities, all the elements of the universe, the skies and the stars, to praise Mazzini and magnify him forever. There is somehow an element of the absurd in the politics and criticism of Swinburne:

'Wrath has embittered the sweet mouth of song.'

He loses for awhile the essential heritage of Shelley and Byron. He is not a Utopian, but a Parliamentary Liberal, not a pure religionist, but an anti-ecclesiastic, in short, ceases to be a poet and becomes a pamphleteer.

In many ways allied to this humanistic and revolutionary aspect of Swinburne's work is the aspect of Nationalism. He is at all times an Englishman, in spite of occasional hymns to the brotherhood of man. Nothing is better known, for example, in the history of English criticism than the great bond that exists between Swinburne and the Elizabethan

dramatists, and the splendid service he has rendered them. In verse also they have inspired his 'Sonnets on the English Dramatists,' and a long series of prologues to isolated plays.

Quite independent of everything else in Swinburne is his aspect as poet of children. It has elsewhere been said that babies are not the natural offspring of such passions or such women as Dolores, Faustine, or Felise. Babies seem with Swinburne to be quite extraneous, quite independent of any logical human bonds, and most of the poems seem rather exercises in dainty words than anything more sincere or substantial. It is to Blake that we look for the prototype in spirit to such lines as these:

'Baby, flower of light,
Sleep and see
Brighter dreams than we
Till good day shall smile away good night.'

In *Olive*, baby verse is treated more philosophically. Here is less of Blake and so singularly much of Wordsworth that I must quote the last two stanzas of this poem entire:

'Babes at birth
Wear as raiment round them cast,
Keep as witness toward their past,
Tokens left of heaven; and each,
Ere its lips learn mortal speech,
Ere sweet heaven pass on past reach,
Bears in undiverted eyes
Proof of unforgotten skies
Here on earth.

'Quenched as embers
Quenched with flakes of rain or snow
Till the last faint flame burns low,
All those lustrous memories lie
Dead with babyhood gone by:
Yet in her they dare not die
Others, fair as heaven is, yet,
Now they share not heaven, forget
She remembers.'

Just as we have been able to range the content of Swinburne's lyrical work under four chief headings, as poems of love, of man, of nationality, and of children, so now distinct subdivisions become apparent in the sources of his phraseology. And these may be considered in their chronological

order: the Greek, the Latin, the Oriental, the French, old and modern, the Italian, and the English.

In the literature of Greece he has two chief models; Sappho, in the lyrics of love, Æschylus in the choruses of tragedy. 'Anactoria' and 'Thalassius,' as we have seen, are often based on the actual words of Sappho, and they always give signs of his fundamental sympathy with her. Technically Swinburne's Greek sense is superb. He makes many metres idiomatic in our language, Sapphics and Choriambics, which had never seemed possible before. How singularly he embodies the Greek spirit is felt in his treatment of Christianity, at least before the mad days of anti-priesthood. In the 'Hymn to Proserpina' we feel it.

'For these give labour and slumber, but thou,
Proserpina, death.'

And elsewhere he says:

'Peace, rest, and sleep are all we know of death.'

It is to

'Æschylus, ancient of days,
Whose word is the perfect song,'

that he turns for the choruses of his Greek tragedies, finding in him most of the vague, primordial, gigantic mysticism which he has so wonderfully reproduced.

With the Latin poets he has less in common. Catullus is, of course, his favorite, but there is little direct quotation, beyond the phrase 'Ave atque Vale,' which has gained a new life with him. He imitates Horace only in the phrase,

'Verona, fairer than thy mother fair.

But of Lucretius he writes in his poem on the 'Feast of Giordano Bruno:'

'From bonds and torments of the ravening flame
Surely thy spirit of sense rose up to greet
Lucretius, where such only spirits meet
And walk with him apart till Shelley came
To make the heaven of heavens more heavenly sweet,
And mix with yours a third incorporate name.'

When we turn to the influence of Oriental literature, we find little apart from the Bible. His poems to Richard Burton show a sense of the voluptuous beauty of the 'Arabian Nights.' In the poem 'Hertha,' the old Hindu idea is curiously adapted to meet the present:

'Man equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I.'

But this poem itself is based not upon the Oriental form direct, but indirectly through the 'Brahma' of Emerson, in which occur these lines:

'They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.'

Similarly Swinburne says,

'I am stricken and I am the blow,'

and again,

'I the mark that is missed,
And the arrows that miss.'

The chief Oriental influence on Swinburne, however, is the Bible, with which his actual relations are most singular. Throughout, he takes a constantly rational view, and the Bible is merely a phrase-book to him. It is an interesting sidelight that he left Oxford without taking a degree because, though he knew more Greek than his examiners, he was ploughed in Scripture. But, however that may be, he understood the quality of Isaiah and of the Song of Solomon and could make good use of their methods and manners. In one of his earliest lyrics, 'A Ballad of Life,' occur these lines:

'Even she between whose lips the kiss became
As fire and frankincense;
Whose hair was as gold raiment on a king,
Whose eyes were as the morning purged with flame,
Whose eyelids as sweet savour issuing thence.'

And among innumerable passages, this also recalls Solomon's song:

'Her beds are full of perfume and sad sound,
Her doors are made with music, and barred round
With sighing and with laughter and with tears,
With tears whereby strong souls of men are bound.'

Most significant of Swinburne's scholarship is his habit of imitating the phrase of the Bible in a spirit wholly antagonistic to its original sense. In such lines as

'The people's nail-pierced hands
The people's nail-pierced feet,'

he is able to emphasize his hatred of Christianity, as also in

'These have not where to lay their head.'

And it is curious in spite of this to see how exquisitely for merely artistic purposes his 'Christmas Antiphones' can catch the spirit of the Church. The language of the Bible constantly impresses him. Every stanza of 'A Watch in the Night' begins with the line:

'Watchman, what of the night?'

In Italian literature Swinburne is principally concerned with Dante and Boccaccio. From Dante's *Stelli* he has borrowed the device by which he concludes nine of his seventeen lyrical volumes, besides innumerable single pieces, with the word *sea*. He seems to see Boccaccio through Chaucer — at least the tales that he retells are in the manner of the 'Canterbury Tales.' From Leopardi, among more recent Italians, he has taken the lines,

'O patria mia, vedo le mura e gli archi,
Ma la gloria non vedo,'

which he imitates in Siena:

'The weary poet, thy sad son,
Saw all Italian things save one —
Italia: this thing missed his eyes.'

Swinburne is affected by both the old French and the modern French literatures. Yet there is no profound community of feeling between him and Villon. Swinburne's touch is seldom delicate, in the French sense — he is too vital, too intense, has too much even of the uncouth about him. 'A Century of Roundels' are thus his own heavy, often highly charged ideas encased in trinkets of verse, singularly inappropriate.

When we turn to the French of the nineteenth century we find the sources of that deep tinge of decadence which colors the 'Poems and Ballads.' Typical of this are such lines as those from 'Laus Veneris':

'Lo, she was thus when her clear limbs enticed
All lips that now grow sad with kissing Christ.'

But he has outgrown this when he finds in Victor Hugo a brother in the cause of Man.

Naturally enough Swinburne's greatest and most comprehensive sympathy lies with the literature of England. It is in his imitations of the early ballads that we find his connection with the Preraphaelites, and he has admirably revived the old Border spirit. The structure of the 'Masque of Queen Bersabe' is also Early English, as is the passage in 'Saint Dorothy' where the heathen king quotes Saint Luke, as Adam quotes Saint John in the miracle play. Saint Dorothy herself reminds one constantly of the Prioress, as she appears in Chaucer's Prologue:

'Her mercy in her was so marvelous
From her least years, that seeing her school-fellows
That read beside her stricken with a rod,
She would cry sore and say some word to God
That he would ease her fellow of his pain.
There is no touch of sun or fallen rain
That ever fell on a more gracious thing.'

And this is an example of his general knowledge of mediæval tradition. More than once he employs figures that stand for stories of the primitive church — as, for instance, this reference to the legend of Tannhaüser and ultimately of Saint Christopher:

> 'Until this day shred staff, that hath no whit
> Of leaf or bark, bear blossom and smell sweet,
> Seek thou not any mercy in God's sight,
> For so long shalt thou be cast out from it.'

Among the dramatists, next to Shakespeare, he worships Marlowe.

> 'What hour save this should be thine hour and mine,
> If thou have care of any less divine
> Than thine own soul, if thou take thought of me,
> Marlowe, as all my soul takes thought of thine.'

And in those lines from 'Laus Veneris:'

> 'I see the marvelous mouth whereby there fell
> Cities and peoples whom the gods loved well,
> Yet for her sake on them the fire gat hold,
> And for their sakes on her the fires of Hell,'

we recognize at once an imitation of the marvelous soliloquy in 'Doctor Faustus,'

> 'Is this the face that launched a thousand ships?'

By Milton's manner, Swinburne is not seriously influenced. But he uses frequently and with great effectiveness the stanza-form of the 'Nativity Ode.' In those vivid lines from 'Dolores':

> 'Ringed round with a flame of fair faces
> And splendid with swords,'

there is a certain reminiscence of Milton's celebrated

> 'With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.'

In his hatred of priests also, we are reminded of the rancour of Milton:

> 'Lo, they lie warm and fatten in the mire,'

he says, recalling Milton's

> 'But swollen with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
> Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread.'

The influences of contemporary poetry were again rather on the side of phrase than of spirit. Tiny fragments of Browning's philosophy are interspersed through Swinburne's earlier work. Those exquisite lines in 'The Oblation,'

> 'I that have love and no more
> Give you but love of you, sweet,
> He that hath more, let him give;'

and similarly the lines from his first 'Dedication:'

'They are many, but my gift is single,
My verses, the first-fruits of me,'

instantly recall Browning's

'This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.'

But the 'Triumph of Time' is Swinburne's great unconscious tribute to Browning. The poem ends with a sort of resignation that reminds one of 'Abt Vogler.' As to the style, where it is not splendidly Swinburne's own, a few quotations will indicate whose it is:

'These will no man do for your sake, I think,
What I would have done for the least word said.
I had wrung life dry for your lips to drink,
Broken it up for your daily bread.'

And in another place he says:

'To have died if you cared I should die for you, clung
To my life if you bade me, played my part
As it pleased you — these were the thoughts that stung
The dreams that smote with a keener dart
Than shafts of love or arrows of death.'

In many isolated poems, other models seem to have been in Swinburne's mind: there is something of William Morris in the 'Garden or Proserpina' and in the archaisms of 'Laus Veneris'; the constant use of the word *reiterate* is a trick of Rossetti's. And one of the most curious examples of remote influence appears in

'Whence thy fair face lightens, and where thy soft springs leap,'—

lines that recall Poe's

'Where thy dark eye glances
And where thy footstep gleams.'

The changes in Swinburne's philosophy, the mad phases of lasciviousness, of rebellion and revolution, of patriotism, are never more than superficial, however much they may mar the actual content of his poems. It is the sea that lies behind him, above him, beneath him, the symbol of all passion and grandeur and beauty:

'I would not rise from the slain world's tomb
If there be no more sea.'

And this, far beyond any sense of the liberation of the French, of the equality of man or the golden days of romance, is his bond with Victor Hugo, the great French poet of the sea. And this is the bond between Swinburne and Landor, that they are able to say each of the other, in Landor's words:

'We are what suns and winds and waters make us.'

HEWLETT AND HEARN: TWO TYPES OF ORIENTALISTS

By Eugénie M. Fryer

THERE are always at least two points of view, two types of people and things, two forces progressive and retrogressive, two species in essence the same, in development antipathetic. This is essentially true of Hewlett and Hearn. Both are artists, both colorists, both Orientalists, both æsthetic worshipers of beauty. Yet Hewlett is swamped in color, Hearn is uplifted by it; Hewlett is steeped in Oriental sensuousness, Hearn is enveloped in the spiritual world of Eastern thought; Hewlett is full of the art for art's sake spirit which tends to realism; Hearn is enwrapped in mystic idealism.

Their ideas of art reflect largely their ideas of life, and these two together portray the personality of each. Hewlett sees in nature, in people, a sentient beauty and reproduces it. To him art is tangible — opaque beauty. But Hearn views nature and people in their relation to the spirit world which surrounds them. To him art is ethereal, evanescent — translucent beauty. Hewlett portrays a personal side of art, her subtleties, her beauty, her charm, but underlying all pulsates the worship of the physical — the hidden note of realism. Hearn's attitude to art is far more impersonal. Beauty to him is not merely exquisite form or color, but the veil which envelopes the deeper, spiritual things. In beauty, in art, in nature, it is not the exterior loveliness alone, but the inner meaning of it all that appeals so strongly to him. He sees into the soul of things, his vision is far-reaching. Hewlett sees, absorbs, and reproduces, but his vision is curtailed—it could never pierce the veil of the ' Blue Ghost.' His vision is blunted by realism; Hearn's is sharpened by idealism. Both these men are keenly sensitive to atmospheric surroundings, but Hearn is far more delicately poised than Hewlett. Hewlett's sensitiveness lies more in an impressionistic way. He absorbs the spirit of a scene like a sponge, and as quickly reproduces it tingling with life. He lets himself go and for the time is completely lost. But Hearn's sensitiveness is quickened by restraint. He may quiver with emotion, he may be lifted to the ineffable ' Blue Ghost ' and beyond, yet he never loses himself. His is an æsthetic emotion that perforce must express itself because it is born of suffering.

With Hewlett life is subservient to art. Art is everywhere; it is the goal. But with Hearn art is the interpreter of life; by it he seeks hidden things; it is the path leading to the goal. Hearn sees in the hurrying crowds the mystery of life, psychological enigmas and problems to be met and solved. Hewlett sees in them men and women alive and palpitating, and reproduces them faithfully, really, wonderfully. He is filled with the beauty and the romance of past glories that pervade the atmosphere of Italy and France and he plunges us into a sea of color — vivid, throbbing with vitality, exquisite. Hearn's color scheme is as æsthetically delicate as the 'pearl tints' of the evening sky that he describes in 'Chita,' and this exquisite delicacy of expression is the very keynote of his outlook on life. For while appreciating the outward beauty and loveliness, yet to him nature, people, and things are but the outward sign of deeper things, and therefore art should be the symbolistic expression of these inner things. It is the inner emotions that interest him, and in art he deals with its symbolistic side. He dissects these emotions one by one; Hewlett reproduces them. Hewlett viewing life from the art for art's sake standpoint, makes realism — coarseness and sensuality — artistic, and therefore, according to his thinking, justifiable. Hearn's æsthetic nature, heightened by his contact with the East, shrinks back from the least suggestion of coarseness and sensuality. Hewlett's ideal of art is extreme,— yet a Western viewpoint; Hearn's is entirely Eastern.

Hewlett's personality always protrudes, his individuality is ever in the foreground. Hearn, largely because of his exotic poignancy, keeps his personality in the background; his individuality, though distinctive, is merged in the 'multiplicity incalculable.' Hewlett gives us rugged pictures of scenes, places, and events that catch our fancy and linger in our memory. He dazzles us by his strong, audacious handling of his materials. Hearn opens up endless avenues of thought which stimulate our minds and leave us eager to seek further. He holds us by his very sensitiveness and restraint. Hewlett is a teller of tales and a fine one, but Hearn is a thinker, virile and strong.

Hewlett is full of a childish simplicity and candor. Hearn is full of a simplicity that springs from nobility of soul, a soul that has suffered much in the pursuit of Truth. For Hearn's fine pride was as sensitive as his perception, and life led him often by thorny paths and rough ways. Yet he never lost his sweetness; there is never a note of rancor or bitterness. His song, though minor sometimes, is never discordant. Hewlett is comfortably happy. Though he is sensitive to surroundings, and affected by

them, his organism is not so finely strung as Hearn's. He is æsthetic but he lacks the spirituality of the latter. He is the Moorish type of Oriental, content to bask in the sunlight, in an atmosphere of luxurious ease absorbing the beauty all about him. He is buoyant, he is gay, revelling in brightness, seeking to escape the shadow. But Hearn typifies the Oriental of the far East, reserved, controlled, melancholy. He is ever struggling in the shadow, the shadow of another world, with unseen, unknown forces. Hewlett is the gay troubadour of Provence singing of love in the 'thrust-hills of the Vexin,' and his song is beautiful, melodious, full of passion. Hearn's song is the weird, mysterious music of the East, pathetic, yet inexpressibly sweet, the echo of the silvery song of the Kusa-Hibari. Suffering brought out his truest, sweetest notes, and developed in him not only a rare sympathy, but also a power that Hewlett with all his skill cannot reproduce.

AMONG THE GERMAN WRITERS

By Amelia von Ende

LONGEVITY is not one of the characteristics of the generation of German writers, who barely twenty-five years ago rose above the horizon as '*Jugend, die dem Aufschwung vorangeht.*' Some did not even live to see the change in the canons of art, which they had heralded. Hermann Conradi, who died in the very beginning of the new storm and stress period, has been followed by an astonishing number of his comrades: Ludwig Jacobowski, Franz Held, Peter Hille, Wilhelm von Polenz, I. I. David, and others. Last year one of the founders of the new school, Heinrich Hart, was called away in the midst of a critical activity, which had begun to surpass his creative efforts in lyric and epic verse. Now Wilhelm Holzamer, another poet and critic distinguished for the refinement and the dignity of his work, has laid down his pen. Soon every one of the guild of youth which stirred up the stagnant waters of German poetry in the eighties will have passed through the gates of death, which according to popular belief admit the poet and artist into the temple of fame.

Almost simultaneous with the announcement of a collected edition of the works of Heinrich Hart, of which Julius Hart, Wilhelm Boelsche, and Wilhelm Holzamer were the editors, comes the publication of some posthumous volumes of young authors, whose work was known only to a limited circle of their friends, yet possesses those qualities which claim the attention of a larger audience. Walter Calé was a typical product of the unsettled thought of a transition period. Born at a time when the atmosphere of Germany was rife with ideas of an intellectual renascence, he ended his life at the age of twenty-two. The volume of posthumous prose and verse is as fragmentary as was his life. Yet the intellectuality of Calé is so typical of the generation to which he belonged, that the book has the interest of a curious document. Calé had developed at an amazingly rapid pace. His knowledge was surprising. Familiar with all the philosophies of the world, he was a searcher for abstract general truths. He typified every individual experience and removed it from the actual world into the realm of ideality. So erratic as to be untractable, so versatile as to be diffuse, he was unable to leash and to discipline his gifts, and the result was disastrous to his achievement. The fatalistic note of his lyrics is significant of the intellectual arrogance of his reading of life:

'But I am unperturbed
And strong as destiny.
The network of the spider
I follow placidly.

My faithful pencil firmly
Line upon line does trace
Off the errant path of delusion
And the lying shadow-world.'

Perversely resigned to the rôle of a passive onlooker, he revelled in the knowledge that the black rider was waiting without, ready to carry him whither he willed, but that he preferred to stay within. It is a curious motive recurring with the insistence of an idiosyncrasy in the *Nachgel assene Schriften* (S. Fischer, Berlin).

The other young poet whose premature death induced his friends to collect his verse, is the Tyrolese Anton Renk. Nursed upon the clear, sweet air of his native mountains, upon the lore and the history of his country, his art reflects a personality of robust strength and simplicity. His view of life was wholesome. Deeply religious and patriotic, he was not the man to indulge in mere poetic speculation, but often sounded the clarion notes of the champion, challenging his people to scale the heights of the ideal. The earthy flavor of some of his lyrics makes them rank among the best specimens of *Heimatskunst*, that Austria has prodced of late, and justifies the publication of the two volumes under the auspices of Jungtirol and the imprint of Georg Mueller, Leipzig.

Aurelius Polzer, professor at the university of Graz, is the author of a book of verse, *In Sturmnacht und Sonnenschein* (Graz, Janotta), which is also distinctly patriotic. Polzer is almost robust in his faith in life and his attachment to his native soil. He sings the praise of the German country and the German people, of German speech and German wine. Sometimes he effectively strikes a pantheistic note, as in the poem *Gott in der Natur* and in *Sonnentod*. Georg von Oertzen, whose new book *Vor der eigenen Tuer* (I. Bielefeld, Freiburg) bears the subtitle *Deutsche Sorgen und Gedanken*, succeeds in giving his patriotism a distinctly individual expression. As the titles suggest, his attitude towards his country is critical; his love for his people is not blind to the weaker sides of the national character and especially to some of the darker shadows that lurk beneath the glaring light of material prosperity. That this poet of the older generation should obstinately refuse to join in the pæan to the glory of the new Empire and bravely point out wherein its much-praised culture fails to fulfill ideal

requirements, is significant enough to give him a place by himself in the ranks of German poets. Yet Georg von Oertzen is no radical or reformer, applying the standards of some Utopian dream to the actual Germany of to-day. He is simply a German patriot of the old school, and it is well to add, an aristocrat, appalled by the parvenu love of glitter and the insincerity apparent to the serious and faithful observer. There is little verbal beauty in this volume of verse, but there is an abundance of verbal strength, with here and there a touch of genuine Old-German Berserker wrath.

Hermann Stegemann's volume of verse *Vita Somnium Breve* (Egon Fleischel & Co., Berlin) is not to be measured by the standard of excellence which his fiction has reached. Its simple dedication, *Meinen Freunden*, suggests that it may be one of those books which a man of unusual strength and wealth of mind can produce in an interval of rest from more ambitious labors. Yet it is not without distinction, and although it shows little of the dramatic power which characterizes his Alsatian stories, reveals other sides of his artistic individuality. There are some lyric gems which should delight a composer, for they have just enough of that strong undercurrent of deep sentiment, and their language has the delicate imagery and the liquid note which makes great songs. *Sonnenwende* and *Verblueht* are far above the longer and more serious poems in the book for genuine lyrical feeling.

Of the group of dramatists that once were considered likely to rival Hauptmann, Max Halbe was one of the most promising. But since the success of *Jugend* and *Mutter Erde* he has repeatedly disappointed his audiences and his critics. The new play *Das wahre Gesicht* (Albert Langen, Munich), will not rehabilitate him in their esteem. It is a most elaborate work, a tragedy in five acts and a prelude, remotely suggesting a hero of the Wallenstein type, but thoroughly unconvincing. The dramatic construction and the scenic requirements show the author's mastery of the technique of his art, but he fails to interest in his characters. The atmosphere of the book is frigid and artificial. Not even the national historic background will be able to save the play.

A tragedy with a strong satirical color is *Aufstand in Syrakus*, by Ludwig Bauer, contained in a volume, called *Theater* and published by Bruns of Minden. But the work which is far more likely to raise the author to a prominent rank among our dramatists is a masterpiece in one act, contained in the same book: *Automobil*. In this little comedy a segment of modern society is satirized so keenly and so forcibly, that it may stand as the final expression of a passing phase as seen through the glasses of a modern Juvenal. The style is admirably well chosen; the characters are so simple in outline as to seem mere charcoal sketches; but the types are so tangibly real

as to become living personalities. Paul Schueler's *Nachtstuecke* (Schottlaender, Breslau) are also an interesting group of plays, but they are rather the work of a thoughtful poet, giving his reading of life, than that of a man writing for the stage of to-day. The problems he treats are vital and eternally human, yet he has the rare gift of suggesting a haunting sense of remoteness from the material limitations of life and the delusions of flesh.

The one-act play has become a favorite with the dramatists of Germany. Felix Doermann has written a delightful volume under the collective title, *Das staerkere Geschlecht* (Wedekind & Co., Berlin). The sex relations are the Leitmotiv, but he directs the shafts of his satire against men and women, because in those relations both are likely to show their weakness. Two of the plays are transcriptions from life, painfully true of social conditions in modern Germany, as elsewhere. The degrading commercialization of sex relations is treated with mordant sarcasm and yet with a touch of grim humor, a philosophical acceptance of the situation which cannot fail to appeal to the audience. The other plays in the book have less of that element of popularity in them, both treating unusual problems. *Hagith*, with its mediæval plot and atmosphere, remotely suggests *Arme Heinrich* and *Mona Vanna*. It is an exquisite dramatic poem, although it is not quite convincing. *Die Weberfluessigen* is an ideal specimen of the *drame intime*. A young girl, member of an artist household, is loved by the two men of the family and stands between the husband and his lovable, faithful wife, and between father and son. There is no action; nothing happens to break up the family; for the girl, knowing that in either case two people, to whom she is devoted, would be made miserable, quietly leaves the house, the peace whereof she has innocently disturbed. The bare statement of the plot gives no idea of the dramatic intensity of this little soul tragedy.

Max Bernstein's book, deriving its title, *Der Goldene Schluessel* (S. Fischer, Berlin), from the play which Kainz has successfully presented, is of very unequal merit. The title play is an exceedingly clever theatrical *tour de force*. In *Die gruene Schnur* the author, who is a prominent lawyer in Munich, has written a capital satire upon German law, which has been a popular subject since the days of Kleist's *Zerbrochene Krug*. Like Doermann, Bernstein reaches the highwater mark in his book in one of those dramatic miniatures, where within the smallest possible compass of time and place a segment of human life is pictured at one of those crucial moments that turn the tide of fate. A man eloping with the wife of another; a waiting-room in a railway station between the arrival of two express trains — that is all. Nothing happens; yet during that brief interval the souls of both live through their whole past and meet in the present, into which fall the

shadows of the future. It is a remarkable achievement both for its psychology and its style. Hermann Bahr, too, has published a volume of one-act plays which are proof of his splendid workmanship and are wonderfully suggestive: *Grotesken* (Karl Konegen, Vienna). No stronger satire upon modern life has been written than his '*Klub der Erloeser*.' The wrath of the individual that has outgrown the limitations of caste still maintained by church and state, but almost extinct in the spirit of the people, seethes in this play. There is a prince, who would relinquish all prerogatives of his rank and courts the favor of an anarchist; and there is this descendent of generations of proletaires, who cannot forget how his forebears were wronged by the ancestors of the other man: 'That I should be so homely! With the profile of Rafael I would have been a saint. But — not to dare to face a mirror! And through the fault of your forefathers! Your people have in the remote past for many hundreds of years so tortured and hunted my fathers, that we, the grandchildren, still bear the traces of secret rage and hatred in our distorted features.'

A curiously interesting and powerful play is Franz Duelberg's four-act drama, *Korallenkettlin* (Egon Fleischel & Co., Berlin). The author has chosen a subject of the utmost sociological importance: prostitution; but he has saved it from being unpleasantly realistic and suggestive of a sermon by using a picturesque mediæval setting. The plot, too, is original. The heroine, absolutely ignorant of life, has fled from the tyranny of the parental home to a house of ill repute, and kills the first man who approaches her. Imprisoned and sentenced to death, she is rescued by the reigning prince, who returns from abroad and on finding his city excited about the strange crime, takes a fancy to the girl. But a fanatic priest confuses her with his exhortations of penance and expiation, and disappointed in everything that life seems to hold for her, conscious of being only a toy even to her royal deliverer, who has placed her upon the throne, she commits suicide. The play is well constructed and the seriousness of spirit evident in the discreet treatment of the unpleasant theme merits special notice.

There has been a flood of fiction from the pens of old favorites and newcomers. Rosegger has satisfied the demand for a book of humor by culling from his works all the stories of those delightful provincials, which he calls *Abelsberger*, and offering them under the title of *Die Abelsberger Chronik* (L. Etaackmann, Leipzig). It is a book worthy to rank with the *Schildbuerger* as an inexhaustible source of amusement. Marie Ebner-Eschenbach's book, *Aus meinen Schriften* (Gebrueder Poetel, Berlin), is also a selection from her writings made for her young friends. It contains some of her most charming stories, as *Krambambambuli* and *Die*

Spitzin, a number of tales and parables, some poems and a bunch of aphorisms. Otto Ernst has, since the success of his play *Flachsmann als Erzieher* and the novel *Asmus Sempers Jugend* written some volumes of short stories, sketches, and *causeries*, full of a homely mature wisdom and a genial wholesome humor. *Vom geruhigen Leben* (L. Staackmann, Leipzig), is his latest edition to this department of his works. Wilhelm Scharrelmann, who will be remembered for his controversy with the school authorities of Bremen, and as one of the authors of that powerful play *Krieg*, which was given under a Russian pseudonym and attributed to one of the younger writers of that unfortunate country, has written a book of short stories and sketches, *Die Fahrt ins Leben* (Egon Fleischel & Co., Berlin), which gives ample proof of his strength as an observer and painter of every-day life. But his vision is not bounded by the world of the senses; he is a seeker of spiritual values even in the material stress of the workaday world. This gives his stories from real life as well as his imaginative tales an ethical significance which few of the modern German realists can claim for their works.

Hermann Hesse's volume, *Diesseits* (S. Fischer, Berlin), contains five stories of a retrospective character and probably autobiographical. They are reminiscences of youth narrated with a charming simplicity. The note is personal, but throughout sincere and genuine. *Aus Kinderzeiten* is the record of a child's first impression of sickness and death, psychologically true, but told with such a delicacy of feeling and with such a strong suggestion of its spiritual meaning as to make it a poem in prose. *Die Marmorsaege* and *Der Lateinschueler* are tales of youthful love; sweet and wholesome, yet thoroughly individual in plot and treatment, they strike the reader as anomalous in a period when morbid eroticism alone seems to engage the attention of the literary world. The book has dignity and charm.

Among women writers Charlotte Knoeckel is a newcomer of great promise. Her *Kinder der Gasse* secured for her a hearing, and her second book, *Die Schwester Gertrud* (S. Fischer, Berlin), shows remarkable progress. It is a problem story of serious meaning. The author handles the difficult question, whether a nurse is justified in abbreviating the suffering of a patient whose death is only a question of days, perhaps hours, with great discretion and with a rare insight into the working of the human soul. Sister Gertrude is a living personality. The author's strength shows not only in her portrayal of character, but also in her suggestion of the milieu. She knows the art of economy; there is in the story not one superfluous detail.

GABIELE D'ANNUNZIO

By Pietro Isola

ONE of the peculiarities of conditions in Italy may be said to consist in the labyrinth of dialects pervading the whole peninsula. This logically indicates a distinction of sections, which as we all know exist and thrive. These conditions, remaining so pronounced as they are, after almost fifty years of political unity, have alarmed many Italians and foreigners, who have concluded that the unity, which cost so much blood and effort, has not proved a success.

Leaving the political question aside and examining into that of dialects, as representatives of varying sections, I incline to assume that in their existence lies the promise of future Italian literature. This for various reasons: the principal one being that in these conditions a perennial source of inspiration will be found, a wealth of color, a strong and distinct sense of locality that will give originality by finding and forming new and newer types to enrich our literature and art. It will also give the wealth of vocabulary that will maintain the language living, glowing, and beautiful. Our dialects have ever been vigorous, sparkling, life injecting; while our universal or literary language has often been dead. Porta Meli, Guadagnoli, to cite a few at random, and surely the incomparable Goldoni, have been masters, not according to Academic standards and measurements, but for the sum total of life they gave out; while the pedants groped about in the cryptic darkness of grammar or rhetoric. The language was the Academy, the dialect, Life. Goldoni had little to do with language and much with life. Many of the Academicians were like the writers that Giuseppe Giusti says: '*Strascican L'Estro Sulla Falsariga.* Our earliest writers, those of the twelfth or thirteenth century, are still interesting and a source of inspiration to us because we find them so near the people in form and thought. They are as sincere as their great contemporaries the painters.'

With our new life, with our new aspirations it was necessary that, rejecting barbaric influences and senile pedantry, a man should rise to fuse language and life into a new form embodying what we have now to express.

Italy has been fortunate. Two men have appeared to promote and perfect the necessary change: Giosue Carducci and Gabriele D'Annunzio. It is not my task to draw any comparisons between these two men nor to prove which of the two has the greater claim upon his country.

D'Annunzio has surely given us a new language and a new impetus. He has reaffirmed our national conscience. He has revealed all the potency, the glow, the color, the life, and the heretofore almost unknown beauties of our tongue. For years we have been servile imitators of our neighbors; we have gorged ourselves with Gallicisms, not deeming our language capable of expressing all that others could express. D'Annunzio has changed all that. He has given us immeasurable power. He stands to-day as our great Stylist. He has felt and feels the civic dignity of the writer —'no longer to be considered as the subtile ornament of an industrious, laborious civilization, but as the first among its citizens; as the highest example of the product of a people; as the interpreter, the witness, and the messenger of his time.'

When still very young, D'Annunzio heard two words that came to him from over the Alps: '*Latin Renaissance.*' It was Melchior de Voguë who uttered those words after reading some of D'Annunzio's latest works. The Italians, still perplexed between pedantry and new necessities, had never addressed to him such inspiring words as these; words that filled him with a new power; with ambition to achieve and lift himself to the exalted position of leader, nay, a regenerator of Italian literature.

Has he succeeded? Do his countrymen accept him as a leader? Alas! '*Nemo propheta in patria.*' There is not a man in Italy more disliked than Gabriele D'Annunzio. Yet, there is not a man who has discharged his task more diligently or has kept his word more faithfully. Notwithstanding his defects, and they are many and grave, let us give him due credit; let us be unstinted in the praise he deserves; if we cannot offer him all the love and admiration we should like to bestow upon a noble man and leader, we must hail him as a great factor in our contemporary literature. He has given us a greater prose, he has, as he promised, rehabilitated and dignified our narrative and descriptive prose; he has given us unsurpassable poetic gems; he has commanded attention and admiration by a branch of art of which we knew little,—dramatic art; he has achieved all this, not by any 'happy fortuitous interference, but by hard work, a virtue not too common with us, who love to sparkle rather than seek for an increasing power within: and when the desire for glory overtakes us, we believe that the conquest of Art resembles the siege of a turreted city, when trumpets, clarion, and clamor aid the courage of the assailants; while only that Art endures which

grows amidst austere silence; slow, indomitable pertinacity, the solitary concentration and the dedication of spirit and soul to the Ideal which we desire to endow with a dominating power among men.' It is only by such discipline that he has been able to gain the high position he holds everywhere.

In his art D'Annunzio has been very versatile; delightfully eclectic, he has been realist, psychologist, symbolist, mystic. He has learned much of all writers; Doumic, Mendes, Rabusson, Maupassant, Baudelaire, Rossetti, Tolstoy, and others among the Russians. In style and defects he seems to have a strong affinity with Théophile Gautier. He has, in fact, been called a Frenchman writing in Italian, but what Italian! By some he has been called an imitator, by others a plagiarist. These of course are the accusations '*a la mode du jour*.' He has too much individuality to be an imitator. He is an omnivorous reader; his culture is vast and he can read most authors in the originals; he is versed in the classics and he has assimilated the literature and lore of his whole country and has fathomed its meaning and beauty. He lacks originality, and in 'Piacere' Andre Sperelli shows this point very clearly, when D'Annunzio makes him say: 'Almost always before beginning to write he needed a certain musical intonation coming to him from some other poet, and he usually sought it among the old Tuscans; an hemistich by Lapo Gianni or Cavalcanti or Cino Petrarch or Lorenzo; a note; a *La* as a foundation for his first harmony.' That is also what D'Annunzio needs, which, let us admit, is very far from imitation. No one accuses Raphael of imitation or plagiarism, yet even in his greatness he needed similar intonation. It is what takes place within; the transformation wrought by genius that renders the work original. D'Annunzio is Italian, his land is of the Abruzzi, and he is himself: therefore, the pollen gathered among the flowers of Italian or European literature could only bring forth blossom with special characteristics and coloring.

As a writer he has been so long before the public that very few realize, not how old he is, but rather how young. He was born at Pescara, on the Adriatic coast, in 1864, and his first verses, 'Primo Vere and In Memoriam' were published in 1880, or when sixteen years of age. His subsequent verses, 'Il Canto Nuovo,' were published before his twentieth year. This would mean very little but for the fact that those verses proclaimed him a poet and placed him in the front rank of literature. Moreover, those verses remain unsurpassed, —his best. We have greater erudition, more artistry, wider view of life (right or wrong); but those verses remain unmatched for spontaneity, fluidity, and richness. They reveal in him a fine sensibility vibrating under the slightest touch, fragrance, or sight.

L'Isotteo e La Chimera' were offered to the public in 1885 and 1889. In these we find evidence of the study of our earliest literature and we are carried back to the limpid language of the *Trecentisti*. All the ballads and songs are exquisite and notable, among them the thirteenth ballad describing Isaotta drinking at the spring; '*Io t'inghirlando o fonte*,' also the fourth ballad describing Isaotta's hand. This is beautiful in itself and interesting as the fundamental theme for his other verses in 'Hortus Larvarum,' 'Le Mani,' and finally the tragic incident in 'Gioconda.' The hand is ever an interesting theme with D'Annunzio, who, when possessed of a thought or image, returns to it, time after time, with renewed energy and enthusiasm. Is this due to his lack of invention? The hands are full of meaning to him. For instance, in the christening of Innocente: 'Giovanni held the child on his right arm, upon the hand that on the previous day had scattered the seed, the left rested among the ribbons and laces, and those hands, bony, thin, brown, that seemed cast in a living bronze: those hands hardened upon the implements of the field, sanctified by the good they had spread, by the vast work they had performed, now, in holding the infant, evinced a delicacy, almost a timidity, so gentle that I could not withhold my gaze.' Elsewhere he describes the hand and gesture of the sower and the hands of Violante.

His verses 'L'Aprile,' in 'Hortus Larvarum,' are very beautiful in form and conception and the music is exquisite.

'*Socchiusa e la finestra, sul giardino*
un' ora passa lenta, sonnolenta
Ed ella, ch'era attenta, s'addormenta
a quella voce che giu si lamenta,
— che si lamenta in fondo a quel giardino.'

Many other verses of this collection represent the best of this author's works in that line, but they defy translation. His 'Odi Navali' should also be considered as well as all his later verses. He has become the Pindar of Italy and beginning with his 'Ode to Admiral Saint-Bon,' he has been called upon to sing all our best men: Garibaldi, Bellini, Verdi, Carducci, and others.

But I must leave his poetic works and give an idea succinctly of his prose work, later of his dramas. In these we shall find exhibited his great talent; his power among the Italians; his artistic shortcomings and other unenviable characteristics and limitations. Of his prose works I shall, for the sake of brevity, consider only three, and these I shall consider through the prefaces. These are 'Piacere' (1889), 'Giovanni Episcopo' (1892), Trionfo della Morté (1889).

Interesting as the preface to a book is, it becomes an important document with these three works. The preface to ' Piacere' is in the form of a letter to Francesco Paolo Michetti, the eminent artist and intimate friend of the author.

' To you I owe the development of one of the most noble among man's intellectual faculties; I owe you the habit of observation, and I owe you also method. I am now convinced, as you are, that there is for us but one single aim of study; one single object,— Life. I smile when I realize that this book in which I study with deep sadness so much corruption, depravity, subtlety, falsity, and cruelty, was written in the midst of the simple and serene peace of your home, between the last songs of the harvest and the early pastorals of winter snows,— Ave, friend, and teacher.'

Now what is the result of this observation of life? What is the method and what constitutes the book? I have already remarked that D'Annunzio lacks originality or inventiveness. And we find no plot in any of his stories.

In ' Piacere' we have simply a large canvas upon which the artist has drawn one salient figure and two accessory ones. Andrea Sperelli, a most sensuous, abject being; Donna Elena Muti, a perverse, sensuous, handsome creature; Donna Maria Fleres, a woman of high ideals and culture, soon to fall in the mire at the feet of Andrea. The scene opens with Andrea Sperelli in his apartment, which he calls the ' *buen retiro*,' awaiting the arrival of Elena Muti, his mistress. This apartment is described by D'Annunzio with great art, painstaking minuteness, in fact, marvellous virtuosity, so as to prepare us to accept Andrea Sperelli as a man of vast culture, of ultra refined tastes, an artist, a poet. Elena arrives and, instead of ministering to his desires, informs Andrea that she is married and their relations must cease. This sudden change in her position seems to awaken some chagrin in him, but he soon realizes that this marriage would add new piquancy to their relation and makes such advances that Elena asks him: ' Could you suffer to share me with another?' This seems for an instant to abash Andrea, but only for an instant, because a few pages further in the book we have to come to the conclusion that he would be perfectly willing to share her with another. Still more, those lofty words of Elena must not be taken too seriously. She is soon revealed as having formed a new liaison with a young Roman. The separation, however, is inevitable on the part of Elena, and Andrea Sperelli tries to comfort himself by giving way to a life of dissipation and dominating passions, a life that is in strong contrast with his high thoughts and splendid gifts. Andrea makes love to innumerable women and they invariably succumb to his desires. For him there is nothing sacred in woman; she is simply a means of satisfying his passions. Andrea has a

quarrel with a young Roman of his ilk and is dangerously wounded. Convalescence follows the long illness and brings with it that period when 'life is so sweet after the suffering of the body' — the convalescence that is a 'purification, a new birth. At this point his cousin Donna Francesca D'Ateleta invites him to her Villa Schifanoia. This cousin, a fine woman, is a secondary character. She is merely the means of causing the meeting of Andrea and Donna Maria Fleres, whom she has invited to her villa. Donna Francesca is a little suspicious of Andrea as a guest in her home when she expects her intimate friend to visit her, and in a good-natured, friendly way chides Andrea about his many love adventures. Andrea assures her that since his illness he has completely changed. He is now a '*Vas Spiritualis*,' but notwithstanding this affirmation on his part, no sooner does he see Donna Maria than he is enamored of her, makes love to her, and finally, she is another victim added to his long list. The pages describing the development of their love or passion, their conversations, their critical dissertations on music, art, or letters, the long walks taken in the country, the beauties of the vistas, the trees and ponds of Schifanoia are among the most exquisite pages of D'Annunzio's works. I have given the bare facts, now let us analyze this new love of Andrea for Maria. Does he love Maria? Let us not speak of Love. Does he even desire Maria for herself? No, and why? Andrea has loved or enjoyed his relation with Elena Muti. A woman of great beauty, she attracted him; it pleased him to be pointed out as the lover of the handsome Elena Muti. Nevertheless he would have cruelly discarded her at any time, but circumstances were such that she forestalled him and married. She broke her relations with him, and yet she accepted another. From that moment a new passion was born in him, a new diabolical, irresistible desire to possess her again. He laments her loss, he sees and thinks of nothing but Elena Muti; he throws himself into the vortex of dissipations; he, the noble scion, so artistic, so poetic, walks among men and women who are, mentally at least, infinitely below him; yet he can breathe that polluted atmosphere with ease and satisfaction; but Elena Muti remains, spectre like, always before him, desired but unobtained, once possessed, now irretrievably lost. Elena, Elena! and we know what Elena is.

He is near unto death, he is convalescent, a '*Vas Spiritualis*,' he meets Donna Maria, a pure woman, a wife, a mother; noble, beautiful in all her moral and physical attributes and he loves, whom does he love? Maria? No. In all his perverse siege of Donna Maria, the other has been omnipresent. Maria is only a veil through which he sees the other, she who is lost to him. He discovers in Maria a bisexual voice —' androginal,— one

quality, the other, the feminine *timbre*, reminds him of Elena, she who is constantly before him. He seduces Maria that he might imagine himself to possess the other, and when poor Maria is at last conquered and is lavishing passionate caresses upon him, she hears him utter the name Elena.

In his preface D'Annunzio told us that there was only one study for him, only one object, Life! Is it Life he gives us? When bitterly attacked by his critics, he asserted, and most impudently, that in Andrea he had portrayed the ideal type of a Roman nobleman of the nineteenth century. That is false, of course. Art does not recognize classes in Italy. There may have been one such man in Rome as there is but one D'Annunzio, but no more. I say one D'Annunzio, because, notwithstanding all his platitudes about depravity and duplicity, he portrays with so much spirit, with so much minuteness, he lingers on the character with so much gusto that we are compelled to realize that in the mind of the writer Andrea is not half bad. All the moral baseness, all the moral stench and soul putrefaction of the profligate Andrea is put into language that is as beautiful and limpid as the mountain springs and as sweet and fragrant as the violets and roses of our hills. That is not Art, because it is not art to give us what is abnormal and solitary, as representative, beautiful life. Therein is contained the immorality of the book; it is not the erotic element it contains that renders it immoral, but what is false, the creation of a neurotic mind.

The second interesting preface is that to 'Giovanni Episcopo,' also in the form of a letter to Matilde Serao. D'Annunzio's letters, whether private or public, are invariably lengthy. I condense this letter.

'The fragile central organs are placed at the service of Art by mysterious and marvelous activities which little by little elaborate the almost amorphous material received through exterior forces, and reduce it to form and life superior.'

He then proceeds to explain the conception of 'Giovanni Episcopo.'

'One evening in January, alone, in a rather dismal, large room, I was turning over my notes; narrative material partly used, partly still new. A singular disquietude possessed me. Although apparently occupied in the reading my sensibilities were extraordinarily vigilant in that silence, and I could realize that my brain had an unusual facility in forming and associating the most varied images. It was not the first time that I had observed such a phenomenon in myself, but it had never reached such a degree of intensity. I was beginning to see as in reality, when the name of Giovanni Episcopo met my eyes; in one moment and as in the sudden dazzle of lightning, I saw the figure of that man before me, not only in his bodily form but also in the moral. It appeared by I know not what comprehensive intuition

which was not, it seemed, engendered by the sudden awakening of a stratum of my memory, but by the secret concurrence of physical elements at that time unexplained.'

This is interesting because it shows D'Annunzio to be singularly open to sensation from the exterior world. What he explains seems to be very close to hallucination. It is the singular gift of the artist to observe things with more or less attention and to receive profound, though unconscious, impressions, which may suddenly be revived by sound, touch, or sight. Thus at the sight of the name, D'Annunzio saw everything: Giovanni, Ginevra, Wanzer, Cico, all their voices, gestures, everything. The sensible world was evoked by the internal image.

This novel was undoubtedly written under Russian influence, and although it is only separated by three years from 'Piacere' it exhibits changes in style and thought. I wish very much that it were given me to say that the changes were for the better.

As usual there is no plot, although the characters are more numerous and complex. Giovanni Episcopo, the principal and important character, is an epileptic, a neurotic, or anything else that a professional man may wish to call him. He is diseased mentally. He has, however, the lucidity in seeing certain things that is characteristic of similar sufferers of nervous afflictions. His speech is also incoherent, spasmodic, lachrymose. The author informs us that Giovanni has read much and thought much; but we fail to discover it from his speech. Nor would the selection of his companions and his manner of living lead us to attribute to him the qualities resulting from reading and thinking. He has visions and is in constant dread of them. He finally comes under the sway or incubus of a man, one of his companions, named Wanzer. He is a rude, vociferous, brutal man, who succeeds in completely subjugating the timid Giovanni. One night as they are alone in the room he commands Giovanni to marry the serving maid, Ginevra. This must be hypnotism. Giovanni accepts the command and goes forth to Tivoli, where he finds the girl and proposes to her. She accepts this unexpected and unsuspecting lover and bids him ask the consent of her parents. Giovanni goes. As he ascends the stairway leading to the parents' apartments, he hears a door opened and a woman's voice pouring out foul abuse. At the same time a man is descending, shuffling, groaning, and whimpering under the wide brim of a hat that shades his face. When this man passes by Giovanni he looks up and reveals a pair of goggles projecting over a revolting face, red and sore like a piece of raw meat. That is the father of his future wife. Giovanni, however, is not shocked by such a face and all that it may portend, but proceeds upon his errand. During

the engagement he realizes the true character of his fiancée, but, inert as he is, and as all of D'Annunzio's characters are, he goes on, intrepid, toward his fate. They are married and we hear him say:

'At least one week, not one year, not one month, just one week! No; no mercy, she did not even wait one day but immediately began to torment me. If I lived a hundred years I could not forget the bitter shrill laughter that chilled me, in the darkness of our room, while she mocked my timidity. From that moment I realized what a poisonous creature breathed at my side.'

But Giovanni tolerates his wife's shamelessness. He even accepts the money she earns from it. He has a son Cico, whom at times he seems to adore while at others this affection is not patent. Cico has grown and begins to see and understand the shame that pollutes the home, and although weak and sickly, there is a certain power in him that succeeds in counteracting Wanzer's fatal influence over the father. Cico sees Wanzer strike his mother and hears him abuse her in foul language. He goes and tells the father, and together they go home, but find the house empty. Cico is in bed sick and feverish. Giovanni says, 'Cico was lying on his bed and I sat by him holding his wrist under my thumb, his heart beat wildly, we did not speak, we thought we heard all sorts of noises but in reality it was only the coursing of the blood in our veins.'

Giovanni left the bedside to go and fetch a glass of water. The key turns in the lock of the outer door, and Wanzer creeps in and softly calls Ginevra. Hearing no answer, he advances into the room where Cico is lying. A piercing shriek from Cioco. Giovanni enters the room with a long-bladed knife in his hand and discovers Cico wrestling with Wanzer's hand, the hand of that man on his child; he rushes forward and plunges the weapon in the back of his enemy. The remembrance of the murdered man is terrible to Giovanni:

'Did you see the dead body? Was there not something awful in that face and in those eyes? But the eyes were closed, no, no,—not both of them, —I know I must die that I may be relieved from that impression on my finger of that eye that would not close. I still feel it, as if some vestige of the skin still adhered to my finger.'

Cico dies: 'Yes, he is dead, he has been dead fourteen days and I am still here. But I must die, and soon; he is calling me. Every night he comes, sits beside me and gazes at me. He is barefooted, dear Cico, and every day after dark I listen for his coming. When his foot touches the threshold it is as if he pressed it on my heart, but oh! so gently, so softly, he does not hurt me.

There is no doubt that in the depiction of Giovanni Episcopo the author

has proved himself a master analyzer of the mysterious conditions of that man's soul. In such cases D'Annunzio demonstrates his power to give form, reality, vividness to what is vague and unseizable. There are, on the other hand, useless revolting descriptions; he seems most obstinate in giving us all the minuteness and repulsive details of purulence, whether it exudes from the body or the heart, without ever offering a single warm spark of sympathy. He is the cold-hearted scientist who sees nothing human before him, but only a subject to analyze at his pleasure.

In reading 'Giovanni Episcopo,' although at times we are moved to admiration by the keenness of introspection and the dramatic power exhibited, we end it feeling dejected at so much misery, and, what is sadder, such lack of human sympathy. The author is too scientific, and D'Annunzio as a scientist will never convince us, although he said in his preface that we must study man and things at first hand, we feel that he has not given us Man, but rather man abnormal and diseased.

The preface to the 'Trionfo della Morte' is the simplest and most direct of all. In that we find explained what use he will make of observation, life, and method. It is his aim, he says, to enrich the vocabulary of our language, to fit the word to the meaning, and to re-establish the narrative and descriptive prose of Italy. Here he has triumphed. Universal verdict accords him that honor. Brunetière pronounced 'Trionfo' a work unsurpassed by any of the naturalistic school. With no plot whatever, but on the usual broad canvas, the figure of Giorgio Aurispa is put before us. There is nothing to be learned from the book except how to speak and write Italian with the utmost virtuosity. The character of Giorgio is weak, unsound. It is plain that unqualifiedly inert love, impure love is the theme. That is all this author ever sees. Only once has he given us Love, and that is in 'The Daughter of Jorio.'

Giorgio loves Ippolita Sanzio, a married woman. Giorgio is a voluptuous person who gives way to passion and calls it love. Ippolita has in her all the germs of corruption and her lover soon corrupts her body and soul.

The story does not describe the development of this passion between the two. It already exists. Thus we are not conscious whether even in Ippolita's love is a true flame. It had to be the usual vicious love, so as to bring in adultery, and this to prove that Giorgio's interest in this woman had lessened since the death of her husband. She is free. So then begins the development of Giorgio's malady. She begins to assume in this mind, attributes, which, sensual, vicious as they are, become obnoxious to him. As his malady progresses she becomes to him the *enemy*. Finally, overpowered by his suicidal propensities he drowns himself and the woman.

Undoubtedly the reader will deem it an exaggeration on my part to condense a story of four hundred and ninety pages into a dozen lines; but that is the whole story. It is not discharging it with levity.

Giorgio is a morbid person, full of hallucinations, with a culture and a mind keen, at times clear. Suicidal tendency is his malady and he knows that it is hereditary in the Aurispa family. In other respects Giorgio is young, healthy in body, attractive, accomplished. The scene opens with a suicide. A man has thrown himself out of a window. Giorgio and Ippolita pass by.

'What has happened?' asks Ippolita.

'A man has killed himself,' some one answers.

A large crowd had gathered there. All these people are gazing at the spot. They are mostly idle workmen. Their faces, so varied, did not in a single case express pity or sorrow or sadness. A youth arrived, anxious to see. 'He is not there,' a man says to him, and there lingered in his voice a certain undefinable tone as of derision or jubilance at the knowledge that the youth could not satisfy his curiosity. 'He is not there, he has been taken away.' 'Where?' 'To Santa Maria del Popolo.' 'Dead?' 'Dead.' Another man asks, 'what is there left?' 'A little blood.' 'What else?' 'Hair.' 'What color?' 'Blond.'

Giorgio, let us go, begged Ippolita, a little pale, pulling back the lover who was looking intently, attracted by the scene. They passed on in silence!

'Giorgio says: "Happy the dead because they doubt no longer."

'And Ippolita says: "It is true — Poor love!"

'"What love?" asks Giorgio.

'"Our love."

'"Do you then feel its end?"

'"Not in me."

'"In me, then?" A poorly repressed irritation seemed to dwell in his voice and he repeated, gazing at her intently, "In me? Answer."

'She remained silent, lowering her head.

'Then after some moments in which the two seemed to wish, with inexpressible anxiety, to read each other's soul, he continued, "It is thus: the end begins. You do not realize it yet; but I, since you have returned, I have watched you, and I see a new sign."

'"What sign?"

'"A bad sign, Ippolita. What a terrible thing it is to love and yet to have this change so lucid before me."

The girl shook her head and frowned. Once more, as at other times, the two lovers become hostile.

We have in this the relation and mental condition of the lover. There

are several pages given to the reminiscences of Giorgio, all introduced to mark his malady. When he returns home he sees again the room where his uncle Demetrio had died, a suicide. He still sees him on the bed; his face covered by a linen cloth. He is pallid, only one purplish spot on the side where the bullet had entered.

Another description of interest as it reacts upon Giorgio's morbidity, is that of the drowned boy, the ' son of a mother.'

' How was he drowned ? where ? ' To show the very spot where the child had fallen, the man took up a pebble and tossed it into the sea. ' There, only there. Only three yards from the shore. The calm sea breathed softly, close to the little one, but the sun beat fiercely upon the pebbly beach and something pitiless fell from the fiery sky and from those stolid witnesses, upon that pallid corpse. And nothing could be sadder than the sight of that frail little being extended on the stones and watched by that impassive brute, who described the accident again and again with the selfsame words, with the selfsame gesture, " There, only there." '

D'Annunzio has delineated with diligence and affection the character of Giorgio Aurispa; his restlessness, his morbidity are drawn with astounding precision; the psychic element, the progress of the malady, the ever-increasing hallucinations are rendered with dreadful minuteness. The tone of the whole book where Giorgio is described has the darkness, the density, the sinister element that presages the imminent breaking of the storm. We are taken into that atmosphere with consummate power, slowly but relentlessly, so that when at last Aurispa drowns himself and Ippolita, we feel relieved, as when we wake from a dreadful dream and find it was not reality. The book could have been shorter by more than half, but in that case it would not be *D'Annunzian.*

We should have lost, in that case, pages and pages of beautiful prose. D'Annunzio absorbs things as a painter, as a sculptor (especially of the medallion), as a poet, as a seer, and in ' Trionfo' he has shown a most marvelous affinity with music. The interpretation of ' Tristen and Iseult' would proclaim him a musician. He is as rich as Dante himself in similes, often felicitous, and at times great. The old poet could hardly have expressed better the sound of the ebb, ' like a flock of sheep drinking in at the spring.' Again: 'The waves would push on toward the massive shore with all the strength of love and anger, dashing upon it with a roar, spreading, foaming, gurgling, penetrating its most hidden recesses. It was as if some imperial Soul in Nature were breathing its passion into a vast many-tongued instrument, striking all its chords, touching its every key of joy or sorrow.'

The pilgrimage to Casalbordino is one of the most magnificent descriptions in the book in beauty and dramatic action. D'Annunzio has therein surpassed himself. He shows himself as the complete master, and indeed we may say he is, like his own Icarus, '*Solo fui, solo e alato nell' immensita.*'

This description inspired one of the finest modern paintings. It is by Francesco Paolo Michetti, and is called 'Il Voto.' Only those who have traveled and understand the South of Italy can appreciate the truth, power, and sadness of such a scene as this, described by D'Annunzio.

'Hundreds of pilgrims are standing, kneeling, or supine before the shrine of the Virgin, crying, "The Grace, the Grace." Those cries that seemed to rend the bosoms from which they burst; those two words: "the grace, the grace," were reiterated ceaselessly with the same trusting and unconquerable persistence; the dense smoke from the numberless tapers advanced heavier and heavier like the cloud foretelling the storm — with the close contact of the bodies — the mingling of breath; the sight of blood and tears — the multitude was at the same time as if possessed by a single soul. It became a single being, miserable, yet terrible. It had one gesture, one voice, one quiver, one passion. All the evils became one sole evil that the Virgin must destroy. All the hopes became one sole hope that the Virgin must fulfill. "The grace, the grace," and under the refulgent Image, the flame of the tapers swayed before that great storm of passion.'

'When the lovers, exhausted, frightened, sickened, leave that horrid scene, Giorgio takes Ippolita's hand, and kissing it passionately, exclaims:— "Behold! See the beautiful wheatfield. Let us purify our eyes."

'Here and there, on both sides of the path, spread the wheat, vast and pure; ripe for the sickle; tall and dense, breathing through the myriads of slender blades and barbs; it seemed at times to blaze as if converted into an interminable sea of evanescent gold. Solitary under the limpid arch of heaven, it exhaled so much spiritual purity that the two sorrowed and oppressed hearts received great consolation.'

Giorgio again is in the garden of his home with his married sister, who has been telling him of her sorrows and new maternal expectations:

'She ceased speaking, sat intent, as if to seize a palpitating pressage of the new life within her. Giorgio held her hand, and they remained thus seated, silent, brother and sister, oppressed by their very existence. Before them the garden lay solitary, abandoned; the young cypresses, tall and erect, lifted themselves to heaven, with sanctity, like votive tapers; the breeze barely scattered the petals of some over-ripe rose; now and then the sound of the instrument came to them from the house.'

Of a more joyful character are the scenes of vintage and farm labor:

'Blessed are the women that sing sweet songs and bring in the jars of old wine. There was a cry of delight as they [the laborers] turned round and saw the band of women drawing near, bringing the last bounties of the reaped fields. They advanced in double file, carrying large painted jars of wine upon their arms, and they sang as they walked. Through the olive groves, as through a colonnade upon a background of sparkling sea, they appeared like one of those processions so harmoniously carved upon the frieze of temples or around the bases of sarcophagi.'

This book abounds in beautiful descriptions, and the language is ever adequate and harmonious. All the sapiency of D'Annunzio as a psychologist does not satisfy us. Although we discover a great power of observation, the poet and literatteur ever predominate over the scientist. I should like to say that 'Trionfo' is a great book for the sum of relevant and useful truth it reveals to us. But I cannot. I can say, however, that it reveals the great artist, and as such, no student of literature should let this book pass unread.

PASCOLI AND RECENT ITALIAN POETRY

By Gertrude E. T. Slaughter

IN his introduction to the Study of Modern Italian Poets, Mr. Howells said: ' I do not know Carducci and his school,' and he added later; ' Carducci seems to be an agnostic flowering from the old stock of Romanticism.' The first of these statements is the only possible explanation of the second. Mr. Howells could not have read Carducci's prose or poetry without perceiving that, according to any acceptable distinction between classicism and romanticism, Carducci is clearly on the side of classicism. It is his glory to have diffused through Italy a breath of the Hellenism that has blown over Europe and has combined with the humanitarian impulse to produce the modern spirit.

Italian writers have begun to allude to the intellectual reawakening among them, of which the signs are unmistakable at the present time, as a new Risorgimento. When Italy had gained her independence and unity. the patriots who had rescued the nation looked to see her become straightway illustrious as in the days when she had been the intellectual stimulus and the æsthetic inspiration of Europe. Disillusionment was inevitable, for the nation had not only suffered but grown old and weak in bondage. The new nation was indeed but the child of the old; compelled to take its place in the world as a child and go to school for a time before it would be capable of mature effort. For an entire century literature and politics had gone hand in hand. Whatever literature the country had produced had been devoted with unprecedented singleness of purpose to the regeneration of the fatherland; and it was largely by means of that literature that the restoration was accomplished. Men took up the pen or the sword as occasion demanded, knowing well that their writings would die on the battlefield, but caring only that the battle should be won and their country should live. The nation which had typified art and beauty to the civilized world did not desert literature in its fiercest struggle, but it made Italy the object of all art and united in the cry, *L'Italia avanti tutto, L'Italia sopra tutto.* It was hard to accept the necessities that followed. Not only was the young nation untrained and uneducated, but it was poor, and among rich nations it was forced to toil for its bread. And now, when it has at length attained to a

certain degree of material prosperity, foreigners look on and smile at a commercial Italy and wonder what Petrarch would have thought! The Italians, too, have felt more keenly the contrast between their present lowly state and their past glories than they have realized the youth and promise of a new Italy. Many of them have still held to their old faith, but not without something of the bitterness voiced by Carducci when he said: 'If Italy has been reborn into the world to become a museum or a music hall or a pleasure resort for idle Europeans; if it aspires to be at best a marketplace where the lucky man can sell for ten what he has snatched up for three; then, *per Dio!* it avails little to have carried the height of San Martino three times at the point of the bayonet, and it were better never to have disturbed the sacred quiet of the Roman ruins with the trumpet of Garibaldi.'

It may be said without exaggeration that what Mazzini was to the political Risorgimento, Carducci is to the intellectual. He is the prophet and leader of the literary and educational forces of his country. The impulses of the present generation toward letters is, to a great extent, the result of his influence. His appeals to the youth of the nation, calling upon them to ' re-create the moral and intellectual, the living and true Italy, for which their fathers endured prison and exile and death;' his timely counsel to writers, warning them against the servile imitation of foreigners, on the one hand, and the unsafe methods of the Veristi, on the other; his constant plea for sounder methods of historical and literary criticism; these have been only less effective than the severe style, the sober and salutary quality, of his own writings. The future of Italian poetry is in the hands of those of the present generation who acknowledge him as their leader and master, and who, not because they imitate him or even resemble him, but because they owe their earliest inspiration to him and are bent upon carrying on his work, may be called the ' school of Carducci.' ' The whole family of livinig poets,' says a prominent Italian critic, ' proceed, with but two exceptions, from the example and reforming spirit of Carducci.'

The imposing figure of this venerable poet and scholar, representative at once of the old patriotic school and herald of new ideas to a new Italy, has become familiar almost everywhere; but among his followers, only one, and he the least reassuring, is known outside of Italy. And yet they include three poets who, according to the critic already quoted, excite the admiration and expectation of their fellow-countrymen more than any other living writers: Gabriele D'Annunzio, Giovanni Marradi, and Giovanni Pascoli.

It would be difficult to find three contemporaries more divergent in their tendencies than D'Annunzio, Marradi, and Pascoli, and it is not easy to see at first how they can have owed their inspiration to the same literary

master. Yet they are closely associated together in their services to Italian literature. They are united in their effort to ' restore the purity of antique form and raise the mind to a solemn contemplation of the truth.' They are fellow-contributors to a Roman magazine, the avowed object of which is ' to call forth the younger writers from their solitary gardens where each one sits cultivating his own sorrow, and unite them into a militant force which may avail to rescue something ideal and beautiful from the wave of vulgarity that is sweeping over this fair land where Leonardo created his imperious women and Michael Angelo his indomitable heroes.'

Marradi is less significant than the others. He is, for the most part, a pleasing and genial singer, with a facile poetic gift. Like so many of his contemporaries he is burdened by the illustrious past of Italy, and contemplates her former glories in a mood of ' deep, immense, inexorable melancholy,' and yet he writes: ' I shall never be a Titan to carry the world on my shoulders, nor the Prometheus of a new age. I am content if I may hear the voices of things that Shelley heard.'

Whatever may be one's judgment upon D'Annunzio, one cannot fail to be both fascinated and repelled by the strange power of his genius. His poetic dramas have proved him capable of beautiful creations, and of the invention of strong dramatic situations. He is master, moreover, of that artful kind of simplicity that the English Pre-Raphaelites studied to produce. His lines haunt the memory like the fragrance of some delicate exotic flower:—

Mila di Codra, sorella im Gesu
Io to bacio i tuoi piedi che vanno.
Il Paradiso è per te.

In spite of his power over words, enabling him to produce all the effects of a Wagnerian orchestra, he is always artificial under the restraint of meter. His lyric verse lacks the merits as well as the faults of his prose style,— a style which is able to carry one forward as on a rushing current, or to refine itself into some gentle and caressing thing, or to astound and terrify by the vividness of its imagery. It passes from the most exquisite delicacy to the most hideous ferocity. What wonder that his contemporaries are troubled by the presence of this genius among them, and that they distrust even his literary ideals and believe him to be less sincere when he aspires to become ' the voice of the national consciousness ' than when he declares: —

' O World! thou art mine.
I will pluck all thy fruit, O World!
I will press out thy juice for my thirst,—
For my ever unquenchable thirst.'

In his ' Laus Vitae ' D'Annunzio hails Carducci as the leader whom he follows, as the standard bearer of the newly awakened paganism which he proclaims. Carducci is, in fact, a genuine pagan. He attempts no reconciliation between Hebraism and Hellenism, but boldly leads one forth from the sanctuary into the sunshine. The classical spirit which he represents is the very antithesis of D'Annunzio's riotous hedonism. It would imply more than a misunderstanding of the ' Hymn to Satan ' — it would imply a total misconception of Carducci's work to hold him responsible for the pseudo-paganism of this consummate egoist. D'Annunzio declares that reading Carducci's odes made him a poet. But it is a far cry from the calm, clear spirit of the master to the utter æstheticism of the most highly gifted of his disciples.

Side by side with world-weariness and decay there exists always in Italy the freshness and clear-eyed simplicity of youth. And it is scarcely a surprise in the complexity of modern Italy to find among the avowed followers of an apostle of Hellenism this man who calls himself the Annunciation Angel, but who belongs by temperament to the Italy of the sixteenth century, and his fellow-poet, Giovanni Pascoli, one who so combines in his nature "the deep-rooted poetry of mere sight and touch" with moral earnestness and the love of men, that he has been called a St. Francis among modern poets.

It is indicative of an important difference in their temperaments, that, in their common efforts to unify and expand the Italian language, D'Annunzio would reënforce it by the study of medieval documents, while Pascoli would counteract the tendency toward a too limited Tuscan by accepting available forms from the various dialects. D'Annunzio turns instinctively to the past and to books for inspiration. He has revived antiquated æsthetic forms in his dramas in such a way as to produce rare and picturesque effects, and his power of assimilation is incomparable. Pascoli turns to the present and to reality, to life and nature. He is less brilliant than D'Annunzio. He has less range and power. His genius is more reticent, his charm more subtle. But his poetry possesses the essential lyrical qualities which are wanting in D'Annunzio's; fine poetical insight, spontaneity, and sincerity. Some of his poetry has the lightness and singing quality of folk-songs. More of it carries a weight of meaning. But it is always strongly marked by the poet's individuality and even when, as in the volume of 1904, its themes are taken from Greek mythology, it represents his own vision of things as they are. It is characteristic and original.

Pascoli is, nevertheless, a man of learning. He is a Dante scholar, a translator of Homer, a literary critic, and the successor of Carducci in the

chair of Latin literature at Bologna. As a literary scholar the mantle of Carducci seems to have fallen upon him. He has the same zeal for the enlightenment of his countrymen, the same stern faith in sanity and right reason, the same industry of scholarship.

Pascoli has related his first acquaintance with Carducci in words that breathe the devotion of the disciple to the master. He tells the story of how he had come up to Bologna from the little village in Romagna, where he lived with his orphaned brothers and sisters, sent thither by the aid of an elder brother, to take part in a contest for scholarships. Every schoolboy knew the name of Carducci, and Pascoli tells with what trepidation he awaited the entrance of the great poet; with what kindliness Carducci assisted in conducting the examinations, and how, on a later day, when the boys sat together waiting to hear the announcement of the successful candidates, the poor boy from Romagna, convinced of failure, thought only of how he could endure to hear the last name read and know that he must return to his home, his few lire gone, and nothing to hope for. In the hush of expectancy the first name was read. It was his own. At the same moment he was aware that the face of the great poet was illuminated with the gleam of a kindly smile, and he adds: 'That poor boy has since become one of Carducci's oldest students. He has heard him evoke in his chair dead ages and vanished spirits. He has heard him elucidate the great poets with a word, a phrase, a gesture. He has seen him preparing in his study those shining and mortal arrows with which he is wont to strike the enemies, not of himself, but of his ideals. He has heard him improvise over the wine cups among his friends and students. He has heard from his lips, in the religious silence of the classroom, the first of the great "Barbaric Odes." He has heard him pronounce his famous eulogy of Garibaldi. But of all these cherished memories, there is none he so gladly recalls as the memory of that smile — that smile of sympathy with a grief which he had lessened, with a life which he had saved.'

And yet it was not Carducci's odes that made Pascoli a poet. He would claim attention, apart from schools and movements, for the quality of his lyrics. Our interest in him is enhanced by the fact that he embodies, more than any other living poet, the spirit which Carducci has striven to awaken. But it is because he is so genuine a poet, more than for any other reason, that he is able to carry on the work which Carducci has held out to the youth of Italy.

Italians write poetry with a fatal facility. Their very language is poetry. They have but to say, '*l'immensità del cielo azzurro*,' or '*l'infinito mare*,' and the poetic mood is produced. And what does is matter about the

nature of a poet's thought if he can call his thought *il pensiero?* It is small wonder that they are easily contented with *Il verso che suona e non crea.* Against the limitations which such a tendency implies Carducci and his followers have resolutely set themselves. They have striven for a vigorous expression. They have often chosen harsh and rugged sounds as a healthful reaction against the too mellifluous strains of facile poetizers. To Pascoli verse is but a medium. Its expressiveness is its most important quality. He has made so many innovations in the language of cultivated Italians that in one volume he has felt obliged to add a glossary to the text! He has managed a great variety of meters. The critic, Dino Mantovani, who is much impressed with the combination in Pascoli of the genuine countryman, the rustic, with the artist and the scholar, has said of him:

'This solitary dreamer, who knows all the life of the country, who listens to the conversations of birds, and knows all the sounds that vibrate and sing in the open air, he is also an artist of exquisite perceptions, one who knows the virtues of words and of rhythm, one who is a skilled workman in the subtle industry of style. When he writes he forgets the example of others and writes in his own way. But into that writing is distilled the innumerable precepts of a learned art governed by a delicate taste. Such a genius, united to such a character, produces a poetry that is unique in our times.'

This poetry, which is indeed unique, has two qualities which must disturb, one imagines, the Italian reader with his native sense of good form. One of them is an over-simplicity. Led by his desire for reality, the poet has been, at times, too frankly imitative of the sounds of nature. He has reproduced the language of birds with unmistakable success as in the 'Song of March,' when the birds come chirping back and

'Cinguettano in loro linguaggio
Ch' è ciò che ci vuole, Sì, ciò che ci vuole.'

The other quality of his verse which troubles Italian readers is its oversubtlety and occasional obscurity. The poet combines the observation of a scientist with the perceptions of a mystic. He sees a significance in the smallest detail, and he produces a certain indefinable suggestiveness which has its own charm. It leaves in the mind that mingling of clear outlines with indefinite blendings which the contemplation of the actual world produces. But it results often in a degree of lyric vagueness that is a proof of inability to find the fitting medium of expression. It is the kind of lyric vagueness of which Shelley is often guilty. But Shelley had the gift of moulding the subtlest fancy into images as clear cut and definite as Shakespearian metaphor. We are more surprised to find that the vagueness and

subtlety of the northern lyrist are paralleled in the Italian Pascoli than that he never quite attains to Shelley's finality of expression. But it will lead us less far afield if we compare the form of Pascoli with that of other Italian poets. And it is safe to assert that, in spite of this fine thread of symbolism, he approaches very near, at times, to the simple dignity and force of a line of Dante.

> 'L'anima mia tu percuotesti, e il mio
> Corpo di tanto e tal dolor ch'è d'ogni
> Dolcezza assai piu dolce ora l'oblio.'

> 'My soul thou hast tormented and my body
> With such and so great grief that now at last
> Sweeter than any sweetness is oblivion.'

The total effect of this poetry is to convey the feeling of a close intimacy, 'an almost mystical touch between man and nature.' It possesses that modern faculty for truth which is recognized, it has been said, as 'the power of distinguishing and fixing delicate and vanishing detail.' But it does more. The poems are not mere pictures. They do not merely reproduce certain harmonies of the natural world. They are not alone what their author calls them, 'the flutter of wings, the rustling of cypresses, the echo of distant bells.' They are saturated with the meaning and mystery underlying outward manifestations. A somber sense of the inscrutability of man's place in the universe pervades them not unlike the background of fate and death which the Greek poet always felt even when he sang of joy and beauty. Yet Pascoli's temperament is not that of the Greek, of whom he himself writes, who is 'happy if the heavens sing to him and the earth sends up her odors.' He is far too modern to escape from a consciousness of the whole world's weal or woe. And yet he does not seek relief in nature for his own overwrought feelings. He does not personify her and long to 'lie down like a tired child and weep away this life of care' on her bosom. He does not even seek in nature 'that blessed mood in which the burden of the mystery is lightened,' nor does he seek 'escape' into a world of dreams and unrealities. His first desire is for realities. The lark does not, like Meredith's thrush, sing to him of 'the new time and the life ahead.' But he sings of the real life around him; he sings the songs of all forests and all gardens, of all times and seasons, and of the labor of men. Keenly sensitive to the sights and sounds about him, Pascoli is always in the reflective mood Not even Leopardi had a more constant realization of the insignificance of man in the universe, of his solitude and misery, his chance and ephemeral

existence. But Leopardi could have had no abiding love of nature, for he took no joy in her. His nearest approach to joy was when he looked out over the world and said, ' Sweet is shipwreck in such a sea.' Pascoli is free from the personal weariness and satiety of that poet of the *Weltschmerz*. He is one of those who, having early learned that the fruit of life is bitter, cannot fail to see that its flowers are sweet. His mood is one of reconciliation with nature because he has found it possible to 'satisfy his eyes with beauty.'

Approaching the world with the unconscious intimacy of a child and with the contemplative mind of a sage, he finds it, first of all, pervaded with mystery: ' *Questo mondo odorato di mistero.*' He says in an early poem:

Climb high in thought the steep and lonely fastness
Where nests the eagle, and the mountain stream,
And stand remote mid solitude and vastness,
O Man of Wisdom!

Send far adown the obscure, unfathomed spaces
Of the abyss thine eye's most piercing beam.
Ever more near will draw what thine eye traces —
Shadow and mystery!

Sometimes the mood of the sage contemplating the significance of things is quite forgotten in the child's delight, and the poet sings some simple nature song, like the ' Song of April.'

A phantom you come
And a mystery you go.
Are you near? Are you far?
For the pear trees are bursting,
The quince trees are budding
Anew.

The bank is resounding
With tomtits and finches.
Are you there in the ash trees?
Is it you in the brushwood?
A dream or a soul or a shadow —
Is't you?

I call you each year
With a heart palpitating.
You come and I smile.
You depart and you leave
Only tears and my sorrow
Renew.

This year, ah, this year
A joy has come with you.
Already I hear
If my senses deceive not
That echo of echoes.
It is you I hear singing
Cu-Cu.

Sometimes a bit of scenery or an incident is described with realistic vividness, like the description of the people pouring out of a little church and climbing down the hill in the soft May evening, while the houses of the village stand closed and sleeping, waiting for them in the valley, and up above, among the birch trees, the little church gleams red in the Alpine silence, and the rumble of the songs of praise still vibrates in the air and the odor of incense mingles with the broomflower and the mint.

In the 'Fountain of Castelvecchio' the water sings to the girls, who come bearing jars on their heads, of its life in the cool and silent woods, before it became a prisoner, and asks them for news of the beautiful world which it can no longer see, and, especially, of the good old woman who used to come for water to the spring in the woods, always chattering to herself, while the spring chattered even faster and filled her vessel, and they talked on together, as a voice in the shady valley talks to its echo.

This little poem is one of many that take the reader into the country of Italy and make him feel that Italian peasant life is as near to the life of flocks and herds, of bees and flowers, as it was in the days of Theocritus or Vergil. The peasants of these poems love the beauty even while they bend under the labor of the country. They are close to the invisible spirits in things. The bells have a thousand messages of hope and fear and joy and grief, while 'white dawn scatters the flocks over the fields' or 'a star leads them clambering home.' The farmer hears the song of the cricket telling him all night long that it is time to sow his seed. It is a country far removed from that land of Arcadia which Tasso and his followers peopled with idle swains piping in perennial sunshine to fair-haired shepherdesses.

It is a country of incessant toil. Man and nature are forever at work. But they are not the labor-laden peasants of Millet's paintings. They have the temper of the poet's own sunny Romagna — '*Romagna solatia, dolce paese.*' We see them at the plow and at their prayers. We hear the sounds of the *festa* coming down the steep mountain side, and the low peal of the Ave Maria which calls them from labor in the fields, or from the dance on the green hilltop, into the quiet church. The old woman says: '*Che disse pane, disse pene,*' yet, cheerfully, with her daughters she bakes and washes and bleaches and spins and gathers herbs and brings home wood, and when the evening bells sound, while the mute spirits of the fountain tremble at the echoes that fill the air and disappear over the mountains, she seems to hear in their tumult a prayer to God, who made the crops and the life of man, that He will bless their harvest and the labor of their hands. The farmer says: 'Give me a spade, and with God be the rest,' and after the long day's labor, he sits down with his family, and while the distaffs are brought out and the young hunter, who is his daughter's lover, listens, he talks of the affairs of his daily life. He talks of the grain and the vine, of how the grain sings to him: 'I am thy life,' and the grape: 'I am thy joy,' how he loves both the fragrance of the oven and the sounds of the winepress, the bread of a day and the wine of a year. And he loves his old olive trees planted by his grandfather, whose white spirit still comes back to pour out oil and urge on their labors. He loves the hedge about his little piece of land, which is like the ring his wife wears, which tells him that she is his. And because he has sown his seed betimes he sleeps soundly and does not hear the rain that pours down in the night.

The external landscape is Italian, not because of descriptions of definite places, but touches of color and outline, contrasts of warm sunshine and heavy shadows, softened by an atmosphere of harmonious melancholy. One is never taken into rugged, massive regions, into the solitude of enormous forests. One is always near to the life of the people. The orange trees that shine in the sun and the dark poplars that file along the stream are not far away from the narrow street filled with old women at their spinning and children at their play. The sounds of life, the murmuring voices of fishermen, bringing in their boats through the limitless blue of a morning on the Adriatic, or the chatter of the Tuscan women whose wooden shoes rattle on the cobblestones of the marketplace, alternate with the hush of the noon hour or the stillness of night, when the 'slow hours are dropping, dropping down into the eternal silence.' Long roads wind around old castles through immovable fir trees and swaying pines, where a fountain sighs eternally, and over the wall, near the bust of a Roman emperor, climb

laurel and rose trees, while yellow broom and blue cornflowers and poppies choke the paths. The grasshoppers are intoxicated with the sun and the lizards creep out to bask at the noon hour. On a green hillside, from which one looks down into the plain and sees a long line of towns and villas lying like a serpent lulled by the ocean, up against the evening sky, like a dark reef in a roseate sea, stands, black and still as a mystery, the donkey and his cart. In some homely barnyard, enclosed by hedges of pomegranates and thickets of tamarisk, with the turkey strutting over the stubble and the duck on the pond, the duck so well described as '*l'anatra irridata*,' and the ponds as '*gli stagni lustreggianti*,' we look on at the yoking and unyoking of the oxen; or we go forth into wide, aërial spaces and watch the interchange of day and night. Nothing could better reproduce the silent hour of dawn than *Il Transito:*

A swan sings in the infinite silence of a polar night. Above the level floor of the sea rise mountains of eternal ice. The swan sings and, slowly, a faint green light rises in columns and colors the heavens. Like a harp touched lightly sounds the clear metal of that voice. As the color grows, a great, iridescent arch arises in the dark sky and Aurora opens her mighty portals. The arch glows green and red; arrows of light dart forth and with the sound of the first morning bell the swan spreads his wings and soars into the distance, pure white in the boreal light.

Midway between descriptive poems like this one and those that have a definite significance are others which convey merely a feeling, weird and mysterious, never ghastly and grim, partly by sounds and repetitions, after the manner of Poe, and partly by the picture presented to the imagination. One of them is entitled ' In the Mist.'

I looked into the valley. Every form
  Was lost, immersed in a vast level main,
Waveless and shoreless, gray and uniform.

No sound emerged from out the misty plain
  Save wild, thin voices crying on the air
Of lost birds wand'ring through the world in vain.

In the dim sky above I was aware
  Of skeletons of trees and shadows drear
Of hermit solitudes suspended there.

And shades of silent ruins. I could hear
  A distant bay of hounds, and down below
A sound of footsteps neither far nor near.

Footsteps that echoed neither fast nor slow
  Eternally. No form could I dissever
Of living creature moving to and fro.

The skeletons of trees were asking: 'Never
  Will he arrive? The ruins seemed to say:
And who art thou who roamest thus forever?'

And then I saw a shadow wandering alway
  And bearing on its head a burden. Again
I looked and it had vanishèd away.

Only the unquiet birds calling in vain
  And distant baying hounds, I seemed to hear,
And ever through the waveless, shoreless main
  Echoes of footsteps neither far nor near.

Another characteristic bit of poetry is 'The Great Aspiration,' which describes the futile effort of trees struggling away from their roots in the earth toward the radiant liberty of the sun,— *la raggiante libertà del sole.*

O trees enslaved, you turn and twist like one
In desperation, spreading across the heavens
The slow, imprisoned shadow of your limbs.

'Ah! had we wings instead of branches, feet
Instead of ignorant, blindly groping roots,'
Your flowers seem to chant melodiously.
And man, O trees, man, too, is a strange tree.
He has, 'tis true, the power to move but naught
Besides of all his longing. We, too, are slaves.
Our vain dream is of flowers, yours of words.

Very often the symbolism of these poems is strained. They are too plainly allegorical. A wandering knight arrived at a castle in search of Felicità is told that he pursues a shadow and that by the magic of the castle she cannot be seen when she is there, and only when she is not there can she be seen; and if, at length, he finds a book and reads therein words none have ever told, he shall see her, but on the instant, the castle, which is life, will vanish.

Sometimes the symbolism is of a higher order, being but an expression of the inward meaning of human things which really exists for those who see. 'The Virgin's Dream' and 'The Sleep of Odysseus,' which show the poet at his best, are symbolic only in this general sense, and in 'The Blind Bard of Chios,' the atmosphere and the delicate sympathy with which the persons of the poem are portrayed have so great a charm that one is not tempted to search out further meaning. The first part of this poem, in which blind Homer speaks to the young girl who leads him, may be quoted:

'O Delias! O thou slender branch of palm
At lofty Cynthus' feet, close by the stream
Of singing Anapus, O child of Palma!
What gift of mine can bring thy heart delight?
For thou didst shake thy locks indifferently
When young men sought thee, and didst turn from them,
And found'st thy joy even in this gray old man
Whose strength falls back while his desire advances.
Him hast thou led beside thine own light footsteps
To cool and shady lawns, and to soft beds
Of murmuring leaves, in midst of sounding pines
Whose rustle, as of freshening summer rain,
Is mingled with the music of the sea.
Nor couldst thou all conceal thy beauty from him —
Thy beauty seen of none but him, a blind man,
And the solitary, silent halcyons.
What gift of mine, O Delias, ere I go
Whithersoever the black ship shall bear me,
What gift of mine can gladden thy young heart?
For I have nothing left in all the world
Except mine ancient, torn, and ragged wallet
And this mine ivory lyre. The gift of song
Has yielded naught for all my labor save
A flowing cup of wine, a morsel of fat
Boar's flesh, and, when the song I sing is ended,
A long, long echo of joy within the soul.'

But Pascoli is not a poet of objective lyric only. The theme of many of his works is the tragedy of his childhood, and his conception of life and the world is easily traceable to the effect of that experience on his temperament. He sometimes seems to be the solitary poet of his own lines who had learned

but one note from the nightingale,— the note which 'fills the heart with memories of things that are no more.' He does not cry out against fate or nature. He identifies his suffering with that of humanity, and the intensity of his grief heightens the contrast between the natural beauty of things which he loves and craves and the misery which the cruelty of man has caused. And because be believes that all mankind has caused this misery, and that all mankind suffers the wrong, he does not hesitate to take his readers into the intimacy of a personal grief. He tells again and again, by many references and recollections, the story of the mysterious murder of his father, a mystery which was never explained and hung like the shadow of a dark Fate over his childhood. He tells of the destitution and friendlessness into which that one moment reduced the family, of how the sense of injustice done the father embittered their already bitter state, of the death of his mother after a year of mourning, followed by the death of four brothers and sisters, to whom he says: 'You have preserved half of your life in me, as I have lost half of mine in you.' His earliest poetic impulse was his desire to make them live on in the world. 'A man,' he says, in one of his notes, 'unknown and unpunished, has willed that an entire family should miserably die. But I will that they shall not die. And if what I have written shall increase in any degree the hatred of cruelty and injustice, then will they, even in their tomb, be rendering good for evil.' Of two sisters who were left to his care, one of them is herself a poetess. He has given us numerous pictures of her in his verse and has printed two of her poems with his own.

Of the four large volumes of Pascoli's verse which have appeared since 1892, when he was thirty-five years of age, there is nothing more powerful and original than the poem entitled *Il Giorno dei Morti*, in which the poet visits in imagination, on a dark and stormy day of the dead, the Camposanto, which is the sad dwelling place of his family, and while the wind moans and the wreaths on the crosses drop tears of rain, the family draw together under the cypress tree, as they used to gather about the fire, and utter their lamentations and their prayers. The father speaks to his sons, and tells them of his death, of how in that last instant of life he loved them for a whole eternity, and how he prayed that his sons might not lack bread, begging that God would hear the dying prayer of a murdered father. And he prayed for pardon for his murderer, saying: 'If he has no sons, ah, God! he knows not. And if he has sons, in their name pardon him. Only let my sons not lack bread!' It is a poem in which nature and man, the living and the dead, are mourning a common grief, and the effect is to produce that high mood which is created by all deep harmonies whether of joy or grief.

Gradually, this personal grief becomes universalized, and he writes

'*Il Focolare*,' in which he describes a mass of human beings moving through a snowy night past gleams of lamplight until the darkness drowns them, moving on and on, each one lamenting but not hearing the complaints of others, towards a single light that shines from a hut in the desert. And they enter, saying: 'At last I shall rest,'—they who have come from the four winds and know each other not. While the tempest roars outside they gather about the hearth only to find that its fire is spent. But as the poor creatures huddle together and one talks to the others who listen, they find one another out, they hear each other's heart beats, and they seem to find a warmth in the spent fire, for they have found the comfort and sweetness of a common destiny.

In another poem the simple story is told of two children who have quarreled over their playthings and been sent to bed, and as their sobs die out, in their dread of the darkness and silence they draw near to each other, and fall asleep in each other's arms, and the mother, going later with a lamp, finds them so; and then the poet turns from them and says: 'O Man, think of the darkness of the unknown destiny that surrounds us, of the deep silence that reigns beyond the brief sound of your actions and the clashing of your wars. Think that on this earth too great is the mystery and only he who seeks out brothers in his fear, errs not.'

It is thus that out of the poet's preoccupation with death and mystery grows a very fair philosophy of life. Out of his sense of injustice in the early days came the belief that the one evil from which we all suffer is a residuum of cruelty left in the race. 'If it must continue thus,' he says, 'Let us open the social cage in which the wild beasts are more ferocious and less able to defend themselves. Or, let us tame the beasts, and then we shall no longer have need of a cage.' Out of the sense of beauty comes the gradual softening of the bitter feeling of injustice into pity. Leopardi knew not whether to laugh at the race of men or pity them. Pascoli has only pity. And he more and more longs to satisfy his eyes with beauty and reveal it to others, because the cure for the evil is simply the recognition of the realities of life. 'I call upon you,' he says, 'to bless life, which is beautiful, all beautiful; or, rather, it would be all beautiful if we did not spoil it for ourselves and others. Beautiful it would be even in sorrow, for our weeping would be as dew beneath clear skies, not as the crashing of a tempest (*la rugiada di sereno non scroscio di tempesta*). Beautiful, even in the last moment, when the eyes, tired with too much gazing, close themselves as if to draw in the vision and shut it within the soul forever. But men have loved darkness rather than light, and the evil of others more than their own good. And for their own voluntary evil they wrongly lay the blame on

Nature, *Madre dolcissima*, who, even in extinguishing us, seems to rock us and lull us to sleep. Ah! let us leave it all to her, for she knows what she is doing and she wishes us well.'

In one of his later poems Pascoli represents Homer as describing how his blindness came upon him. He says that before he was blind he plucked the flowers of things, which still breathed their perfume on the dark silence. And when the goddess who had caused his blindness came to him with softened heart and wished to make a blessing out of his misfortune, she granted him the happiness of seeing into the long, immense, inviolate shadow, in the pale light of sunset. And Pascoli would be himself a poet who sees the beauty in the shadow as well as in the sunlight. The tears of things and the flowers of things — these are always near together in his poetry. And the flower is no 'fretful orchid hot-housed from the dew.' It grows in the open air under the low-hanging Italian sky. His conception of beauty is very different from that of D'Annunzio, who represents his heroes as going madly on through life from destruction to destruction, led by the fatal instinct for beauty. And, with a very different view of humanity from D'Annunzio's, who thinks that the most we can do is to offer music and flowers to a dying man, Pascoli, from having always seen 'the dim face of beauty haunting all the world,' comes to see in it the light that lightens the darkness. The spirit of poetry says:

'I am the lamp that burneth tranquilly
In thy darkest and loneliest hours,
In the saddest and heaviest shadows.
The gleam of my pure ray shineth
Afar on the wanderer treading
By night with a heart that is weeping
The pallid pathway of life.
He stops, and, anon, he beholdeth
The gleam of my light in the Soul.
He takes up again his dark journey
And lo! he is singing.'

Pascoli declares that the thought of death is religion, and without it life would be a delirium. He thinks that man has returned by the guidance of science to that sad moment when he first became conscious of his mortality, before he had set up illusions and denied death. And now poetry must join hands with science in the fearless recognition and veneration of our Destiny. It is true that the poet does not quite believe in the religion of Death. For, when he sees a sprout shooting out of an old lichen-covered

log, he wonders if perhaps death, too, is not a dream. And when he goes out under the stars and looks up among the myriads of worlds as he does in the very striking poem, '*Il Ciocco*,' he says: 'Because the time will come when I must close my eyelids, the vision will not be therefore ended (*Non però sia la vision finita*).' And when our life, which is but a speck of dust on the wing of a moth that flits about a light which itself is but one of a myriad of lights, when that is scattered and our earth has perished and suns have contended with suns, when, after all the storms of the universe, the slow snows of eternity have destroyed the suns and silence has entered into the sepulchre of dead stars and fossil worlds, even then, he thinks, the Great Spirit will take up new constellations in his hand and fling them anew to be shipwrecked in the sea of ether, to endure ever new death and ever new life. Even then some one searching for truth through the Cosmos may find in the spectrum of a ray the trace of human thought.

Just as he who declares the religion of death believes in life, even so he who strives for realities and would have poetry join hands with science, he is, like all true poets, a believer in dreams. His Hermit says: 'There are two vanities, the shadow of things and the shadow of dreams. And the shadow of things is darkness for him who would see, and the shadow of dreams is grateful shade for the tired soul.' And Alexander the Great, the doer of deeds, when he thinks of the mountains he has climbed and the rivers he has crossed, exclaims:

> 'O azure-tinted mountains! and you, too,
> O Rivers! blue as skies and seas are blue;
> Better it were to stand by you and dream
> Nor look beyond.
> Dream is the infinite shadow of the true.'

'The poetry of earth is never dead,' and if one sometimes grows alarmed at the form it assumes in the mind of a D'Annunzio, one may turn with reassurance to the work of a poet like Pascoli. It would be a serious mistake to suppose that the future of poetry in Italy is in the hands of trivial poetasters whose only aim is to relieve the tediousness of modern life by amorous songs and figments of enchantment. The fatherland is, indeed, no longer the poet's theme. His interest is in humanity. He has become cosmopolitan in spirit even while he remains a native born. In the universality of his spirit Pascoli goes back to Leopardi and bridges the gulf between. And, yet, he is typically modern. Carducci represents a transition. In Pascoli the modern spirit, with its desire of reality and its scorn of illusion

and its sentiment of universal pity, is fully awake. Pascoli is a child of nature who longs to 'enclose the turbid universe in lucid words.' But he burns with the ardor of Lucretius to free men from their doubts and their fears and their self-inflicted torments. He yearns toward a new era when poetry shall take up the sceptre of the priest and become the pacifier and purifier of humanity.

PLINY'S AUTHORS

By G. S. Bryan

WRITING on one occasion to Sosius Senecio, the persistently amiable Pliny Minor begins: 'This year has produced a great crop of poets. During the whole month of April there was hardly a day when somebody was not giving a reading.' It might be possible here to detect a tone of mild protest. In the law courts April was the busiest of months, and Pliny was a considerable advocate and a student of professional detail. He somewhat prides himself on deferring *his* readings to non-term in July. Even then, once, when his guests had already assembled, he was suddenly summoned in a matter of counsel, and after an exculpatory address left his audience to attend to it. Upon his return, however, he made compensation by a two days' reading from a collection of his verse. The listeners insisted, he says, and on fair warning he read straight through without skipping.

Pliny's 'Letters' allude frequently to these author's readings; contemporary writers refer to them; Horace satirizes the 'troublesome reader' as reciting to death those luckless enough to fall into his clutches. They seem to have had no prominence in the republic, but in imperial times they formed an important literary phenomenon, whether from the concentration of power and consequent comparative decline of interest in public affairs, or from other cause. Nowadays authors' readings are for the greater part limited to those whose previous popular success makes them profitable as lyceum attractions. Generally, the reader employs published material already familiar, to which new interest is supposed to be given by an intimate and peculiar interpretation. In Pliny's Rome, conditions were practically the reverse. The book-selling of the time did not have the complex present organization. It did not seek out and encourage the 'literary deluge'; there were no publishers' readers critically to examine and appraise submitted works: more than all, perhaps, the subtle art of what Macaulay, in the historic Edinburgh essay on Montgomery, describes as 'puffing,' was not invented. Hence, the aspiring author sought another method to determine the availability of his work for publication; in the event of approval, to have that work already widely known; and generally to bring himself to attention. The author's reading, having been introduced by the author, critic, and collector, Asinius Pollio, found extensive acceptance. Evidently it was not easy for even the indefatigable Pliny to keep up with the schedule;

though he boasts that indeed in this record-breaking April he 'failed scarce any one.' The method is not dissimilar in substance to that by which works are sometimes now 'privately printed' in limited editions, distributed for criticism and suggestions, and, in case of a suitable reception, placed in the regular channels of publication.

Of course, the material of these readers was not always in meter. Pliny's inaugural address as consul, for example, was elaborated and enlarged into a volume, and thus recited for three consecutive days. Presumably, all the usual forms of prose were introduced. But it was a sort of 'culture' to essay to build the lofty rime. 'Unequipped and equipped, indiscriminately we write verses,' Horace had long before written; and this became truer as time passed. Emperors, statesmen, jurists, and warriors would enter the lists of 'incorrigible amateurs.' In Pliny's time there seems to have been a good deal of monotonous imitation of the Augustans. Of Silius Italicus, who composed a 'Punic War,' Pliny feels constrained to say that he 'wrote verses with more painstaking than talent and sometimes tested people's opinion by giving readings from them. Audiences, according to the same authority, became increasingly ungracious. 'Very many,' he says, 'sit in the lounging places and while away with gossip the time when they should be hearing the reading; and they order it reported to them from time to time whether the reader has already put in an appearance, — has made his prefatory remarks,— has unrolled a large portion of his manuscript. Then at length, and even then slowly and loiteringly, they come. Nor yet do they stay through, but withdraw before the end,— some covertly and stealthily, others openly and freely.' This was the Silver Age, and already the well-worn discussion of the 'slump in poetry' was beginning. Other more obvious humors were not wanting. The useful Pliny also tells how a scholarly equestrian was reading from a book of elegies, and opened one with a complimentary reference to Iavolenus Priscus, a patron of his. 'Priscus, you bid me,'—he began. Now Priscus, who was present,—perhaps in one of the chairs which were apparently, like those on present-day platforms, reserved for distinguished guests, — had either dozed or wandered afield; and, recalled by this sudden mention of himself, blurted out, 'Bid you? Not I' (as who should say, 'Not guilty'), to the great amusement of many. Possibly the good Priscus was weary of elegies; these verse-readings might, as has been suggested, be lengthy affairs. 'This is the third day,' writes Pliny, 'that I have had the utmost pleasure in attending a reading by Sentius Augurinus,'—the same consisting of a series of brief poems. However, Pliny solemnly observes that Priscus (a distinguished jurisconsult) is certainly of doubtful sanity, though not yet compelled to withdraw from his activities.

Yet why speculate whether the flatteries of clients or the applause of a well-drilled *claque* such as a patron was ready to supply along with an auditorium, inflated minor bards and injured literary art? It was all in a fashion rather like the English time when everybody turned Pope-ian couplets, and many effectively. There was a good bit of sound study of the best literature, and of connoisseurship in it. To maintain such a degree of appreciation was at least something. As to imitation, it is unlikely that much of it was so servile as that of Silius. It is to be noted that Pattison thought what Pope frankly styled 'The Satires and Epistles of Horace Imitated' 'among the most original of his writings.' Pliny, for example, avows his imitation of Cicero, and his letters are quite apparently patterned on the Ciceronian; yet they are also quite unique.

After that busied April, Pliny assures Senecio that he is going into retirement, to compose something he will not, in his turn recite,— lest he seem to have been rather a creditor than an auditor. Perhaps along the Clitumnus, or looking out from Laurentum across the Tyrrhenian Sea, he may have repeated these lines of one

'. . . who never dare recite
To crowds the humble verse I write;'

authenic poetry, its 'common sense' tinged not, indeed, with the Vergilian wistfulness, yet with its own philosophic melancholy.

'Scattered the snows; the grasses to the plain
Return, leaves to the tree.
The seasons change, and in their bounds again
Slack streams run peacefully;
The sister Graces, three,
By nymphs attended, lead the choral strain,
The circling year — yea, and the hour that flies,
Hastening the genial day,
Alike against immortal hopes advise.
The west winds waft away
The cold; spring cannot stay,
For close treads summer, and full shortly dies
When fruited autumn has its stores displayed;
Then winter's hush. Yet, though
The moon may wane in heaven, it does not fade.
We, when to realms below
With good and great we go,
Are but a mound of dust, a fleeting shade.'

THE MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT'S DREAM

A Conception

By Catherine Postell

ALONG in midsummer, the full-blown rose of the year, when the earth creaks slowly on its axis, when the theaters in London were closed, and London itself grown intolerable, Shakespeare was in the habit of going up to Stratford on the Avon to rest. There came one midsummer, perhaps in 1598, when he sought the coolness and the shade with more than his usual avidity. Perhaps he was more than usually jaded. It may have been that both work and winter had been unusually severe. He had written and presented the three parts of Henry the Sixth, Titus Andronicus, Comedy of Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Richard the Second, and Richard the Third. Stage manager as well as playwright, actor as well as critic, more than the day's work had to be crowded into the day. If to the overwork inside must be added the fog and the smoke and the cold of the London winter, can you imagine with what joy he heard again the laughter of summer in the cool green shade of Stratford? He must have laughed himself as he talked back to the babbling Avon.

He was a man of a broad, generous, kindly spirit, and the fog and the smoke rolled away from his soul at the first touch of kindly nature. He loved nature, her flowers, her suns, her blue horizons, her long hot happy days. He loved the night also, and often went to sit at the close of day in his old-fashioned garden to watch the stars come out and the children at play among the flower beds.

One day when the heat had been more oppressive than usual and the night more welcome, he went in the dusk to sit in the garden in that summer house.

> 'Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.'

The moon threw her silver fretwork on the wall, and some faint stars trembled in the west. Susanna and her mother were sitting on a nearby bench talking over household matters, their voices making a pleasing background for his idle thoughts. Judith was romping about watering her flowers, scolding the gardener, pulling her gossip, sweet Mistress Prue, into the summer-house, and calling upon her father to settle her monstrous troubles: the gardener, that old Matthew Crabapple, had pulled up her dear wild thyme; sweet Prue would think her cowslips prettier than her

violets; the dog, Don Roderick, had stepped on her biggest rose,— then before he could answer, she was away like a spirit, drawing the gentle Prue after her, to throw themselves down on a bank of sweet warm earth. She was at that half age,— thirteen,— a child, a woman, a fairy. The father laughs to see the two girls so careless, so happy. He heaves a long sigh of rest. This is better than London, better than writing plays, better than anything.

By and by the air changes, the slothful breeze has a coolness in it, the dew is heavy. The good Anne and Susanna go heavily indoors, the children call a sleepy good night. The father thinks to go inside himself. He can keep early hours. He is an idler, too, an inconsequent loiterer on the summer sea. He lingers a moment to let the hush sink into his tired spirit,— but in that moment something happens. The night tiptoes up to him with her finger on her lips. She touches him with her perfumes, her sighs, her awful stars. The unreal gets into blood and rides his brain. Vainly he puts up his hand to ward off his thick-coming fancies. But no, the starry night gives him no rest. His imagination ' bodies forth the forms of things unknown, and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.' He cannot stop the shuttle from weaving. A wonderful web spins itself from his brain, and into this web everything is caught up and becomes part of the mesh,— the old actor-life in London, the classic mythologies that have enamored him in leisure hours, the children at play, the moonlight fretting his wall. A pea-blossom, a shivering cobweb bright with dew, a fluttering moth, a mustardseed rocking in its yellow cradle, are beings from the overworld. Judith is Titania, lying on a bank ' whereon the wild thyme grows,' and again she is the woman Hermia, and Prue is Helena with lovesick passions. The little Hamneth, now two years dead, besieges for his small place in the weaving.

Then Shakespeare takes the whole thing, broken bits of plays, lovers' intrigues and quarrels, fairy themes,— the whole tangled web, and drops it by the Thracian sea. England is too real, too workaday. That little land of Greece, the last resort of fauns and satyrs, nymphs and sprites, the only home of belated gods and goddesses, gives a warm welcome to the gossamer creation of his brain. Romance breathes here her native air, and Poetry and Fancy are not afraid to walk hand in hand through the Athenian groves.

It was too sweet a tangle to unravel and weave again by law and rule, and yet the great dramatist could not but put it in a play. What wove itself to music in the brain of Mendelssohn or to pictures in Raphael, in Shakespeare translates itself through that sublimest art which leaps red hot from

heart to heart. In this play no less than four distinct parts clamored for entrance. How to weave these together into one harmonious whole and keep the parts distinct yet blended,— who could have done this but Shakespeare? Then, with a genius all his own, he lifted the fabric out of the realm of criticism and placed it in that world of lawlessness — the world of dreams.

'If we shadows have offended,
Think but this and all is mended,
That you have but slumbered here,
While these visions did appear.'

'Midsummer's Night's Dream' has perhaps never been very successfully presented on the stage. It was presented in a crude way in the time of Shakespeare, and we have authentic information that it was once performed on Sunday at the house of the Bishop of Lincoln, and that the actor who took the part of Bottom was condemned by a Puritan tribunal to sit twelve hours in the porter's room of the palace wearing an ass' head.

The sober love affair of Theseus and his bouncing Amazonian bride, the tangled passions of the four Athenian lovers, the comic interlude of the play within the play, and the coming and going of the little fairy people mark the four motifs that frisk in and out, now one and then another holding the center of the stage. There is no strong plot, no earnest motive, no deep passion, but a light and joyous theme, tangled, grotesque, now up, now down, fantastical,— a midsummer night's dream.

Shakespeare could not resist his subtile satire on life in his delineation of the part of the four Athenian lovers. Lysander and Demetrius both lay their devotions at the feet of Hermia, making the beautiful Helena that desperate thing,— a woman scorned. The little people of the over-world are called in to set the music straight between these mortals. Oberon is overcome with pity for the unfortunate Helena, and makes a desperate effort to set right her wrongs, but Puck, who is Destiny, pours the love-compelling foment into the wrong ear, and a new crisscross, more unhappy than the first, is his only reward. The dear intermeddler finds the sweet bells jangled yet more harshly out of tune.

Within the play Shakespeare introduces a second play, the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe. He is fond of doing this. It is his amusement. Held back by potent reasons from using the scalping knife on those who murdered his lines in the real play, in the mock play he can let himself go, shaking with laughter doubtless, as he dares to write down their foolish boastfulness, their ludicrous importance, their unconscious stupidity. In Hamlet occurs a notable instance of a play within a play, the instructions to the actors so deftly put into the mouth of the melancholy Dane being,

doubtless, intended for some of the hopeless mouthers of his own tragedies. A choice bit of humor lightens the somber play when old Polonius, making his foolish boast, says, 'I was accounted a good actor; I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed in the Capitol: Brutus killed me.'

To enact the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe, Shakespeare calls in the Athenian workman, the joiner, the carpenter, a weaver, a bellows-mender, a tinker, and a tailor, thus turning it into one of the most laughable bits of comedy within the pages of Shakespeare. In this charming bit the merry hits at his actor experience in London make one of the finest parts of the play, and give us at the same time a comic glimpse into the life and nature of Shakespeare. I can imagine him roaring with laughter when Snug the joiner wants the lion's part written out.

> 'Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.'

Or when Flute, the bellows-mender, says, 'Don't let me play the woman, for I have a beard coming,' did any one guess the laugh behind it? Most of all he must have liked putting the officious, ubiquitous Bottom down on paper. We have all seen Bottom, sometimes as a man, sometimes as a woman, always as the fellow that wants the best part and all the parts in life. He is given the hero's part, but he wants the heroine's also. 'Let me play Thisbe, too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. "Thisbe, Thisbe. Pyramus, my lover dear, thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear."' He even tries to take the lion's part from Snug,—'I will roar that I will make the Duke say, "Let him roar again, Let him roar again."' When it is objected that he will make the ladies shriek if he makes so much noise, he says, 'But I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as quietly as any sucking dove, I will roar an' twere any nightingale.'

Bottom does not wear his asinine appendages so conspicuously outside the play, but our Titanias fall in love with him just the same, and dote upon him — *ad nauseam.* We have all heard her raptures: —

> 'Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
> While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
> And stick musk-roses in thy sleek, smooth head,
> And kiss thy fair, large ears, my gentle joy.'

It is well for her if she does not discover that the fair, large ears are ass' ears, and that her 'gentle joy' has a soul only for good dry oats.

I know not how it is in England, if the nightingales sing there, but in the far south, if the moon be shining, along towards midnight the mocking-bird wakes with first a hint, a flutey note that breaks in two, and stops, and

then goes on again, and stops, and you turn on your pillow and think to go to sleep again, when lo! outside your window such a burst of music as only angels can imagine. Perhaps they sing so in England. Perhaps the song of the nightingales made such breaks and beats in Shakespeare's dream. His great heart swayed to music as æolian strings tremble to the touch of the wind. Even in his tragedies he cannot hold it back, notably in one of the greatest of them all:

> 'Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile,
> And touch thy instrument a strain or two?'

asks Brutus of the drowsy child, as he sits in his tent on that sleepless night before Philippi. In his present lightsome and gladsome theme the music got tangled up in his thoughts, and we have Titania saying,

> 'Come, now, a roundel and a fairy song.'
> '. . . Come sing me asleep.'

Even Bottom says, when he wakes with his ass' head, 'I will walk up and down here and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.' His gentle braying wakes Titania, who says:

> 'What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?
> I pray thee gentle mortal sing again;
> Mine ear is much enamored of thy note.'
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 'I do love thee; therefore do thou go with me,
> I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
> And sing, while on pressed flowers thou dost sleep.
> Wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?'

Bottom, whom the soul of Titania has not touched to finer issues, replies from the ass' standpoint, 'I have a reasonable good ear in music; let us have the tongs and bones.'

Oberon, when he would cast deep sleep upon the Athenian lovers, commands:

> 'Titania, music call!
> Music, ho music, that charmeth sleep!'

When the iron tongue of midnight had told twelve, and Titania and her train come to bless the bridal home of the Athenian lovers, hand in hand they dance trippingly through the house singing as they go.

What Shakespeare saw on that moonlight night in his garden we shall never know. Mortal words cannot contain the immortal visions of the seer. Caught up into that seventh heaven, it is given to no man to hold back the curtain that others may enter too. At best he can bring back but a frag-

ment of the palace wrought of living stones, a single note of that tide chorus that caught him up as on living wings. He can only hold to us a glass, through which we see darkly, a broken lens that casts queer shadows,— a hint of tenderness overcrowded with grotesqueness, a tragic strain changing to impish laughter. In the love scenes of Midsummer Night's Dream the strength and bitterness limp and halt, turn suddenly from hopeless love 'wild with all regret' to a disgraceful squabble between two women erstwhile friends and schoolmates over a man scarcely worth the thought of either.

'Helen, I love thee; by my life I do.
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Compare this with the noble passion of Troilus for Cressida.

'I am giddy: expectation whirls me round.
The imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense; what will it be
When that the watery palate tastes indeed
Love's thrice-reputed nectar? Death, I fear me;
Swooning destruction; or some joy too fine,
Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness,
For the capacity of my ruder powers.
I fear it much.'

On that night of Shakespeare's dream there hovered about Judith in the moonlit garden, a faint shadow, playing when she played, laughing as she laughed, holding a little aloof from her wilder sports, lingering long after the others had gone, sitting soberly in the summer-house, with a face made of starlight, sometimes casting wistful glances back at the father in the shade,— Judith's twin brother, the little Hamnet, now two years dead. He drifts into the dream, a fragrance, a hint, a touch of passionate longing:—

'I did but beg of thee a little changeling boy
To be my henchman. Give me that boy!'

We come to the Midsummer's Night's Dream, not to cavil, not to study, not to understand, but to revel, to enjoy. It is a poet's holiday fancy when his genius lies stretched in lawlessness on summer clouds. It is a midsummer night, an interlude, a dazzle of irresponsible brilliance, a many-hued rainbow spanning the under-world. It is laughter and love and music and song and the dance of the fairies. The ivory gates swing open. We drift into the land of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream.

THE ROSE

By Walter H. Mann

O Sire, for thou didst knight me, send me forth,
To thee do I bring word the quest is lost!
And yet so nearly won I tremble now
To think how close I ventured on success.
This is the story of the quest I lost,
Perhaps to-morrow I may ride and win.

'Twas on a May-day many a year agone,
That forth I rode, strong steel and stronger youth,
All music of the Maytime in my heart,
And on my lips a song of love I knew not.
Full easy seemed the quest and short the way
As under blooming orchard trees I rode
The narrow way that broadens to the world.
And many a day I rode and sweet it seemed
Till on a sudden, came a desert land
Stretching away in yellow sandy leagues
And seemed no dwelling place for man or beast.

But soon I came on children playing; hard
Their faces seemed, eaten with bitter dust;
Bleared were their eyes, yet as they plied their games
Some of the ways of childhood did I note,
For, when I asked them what they wrought, one cried
" We build a mountain of the shining gold! "

And lo! the little heaps of dirty sand.
I said, " O children know you of the land
That lieth in the distance like a dream ? "
They looked and spake, " We know of no such land;
And what are dreams and whither would'st thou fare ?
Is there not yellow gold in plenty here ? "
Then I clapped spurs to horse and rode away,
And clouds of acrid dust arose behind.
But on the morrow when the desert grew
Trackless and waste, I came upon a troop
Of men and damsels all deformed and foul

Pelting each other with the horrid sand.
And the harsh laughter of the wantons seemed
Bitter as gall, and much I loathed the land.
Yet I bespake them: " See you not the wood
A glimmer o'er the desert like the dawn ? "
And then they cried: " What desert meanest thou ?
Here is no desert but a land of love."
So rode I on till in mid-afternoon,
The hot sun burned aslant the gleaming sand,
Were men and women digging in the fields
And near them others binding into sheaves,
And sage and cactus were the sheaves they bound.
Angry that men should toil so hard for naught
I cried, " What make you in this arid place
When in the distance lies a joyous land
Where trees are green and living waters spring ? "
And straight they looked upon me, and cried, " Fool
Here is the garden, desert lies beyond."
So rode I seven days and seven nights,
And all so boundless did the desert seem
That all the stars in heaven 'gan to pale,
And hope had sunk so far down in my heart
That seemed the universe a sandy waste,
And men and women idle mockeries.
But on the seventh evening near to dusk,
I came upon some old men by the way,
And these were all asleep in the hot sand.
" How many leagues to reach the happy land
Behind whose hills we see the purple sky ? "
They rubbed their eyes, and looked at me askance:
" Why thou art in a fair land even now,
Where old men slumber on soft beds of flowers!
What wouldst thou more ? That thou dost see beyond
Is but a land of lies and mockeries,
Chimeras and vile monsters habit it,
And fill its valleys with the bones of men.
Venture not thither; bide thou here with us.
Here are cool, mossy beds for weary limbs.
And sweet repose for who have journeyed far."
And there they lay, couched on the bitter sand,

With serpents of the desert coiled about them,
Contented to be one with creeping things,
Transformed by foulness till the foul seemed fair,
Dust-blinded to the beauty of the world!
So all night long I rode and knew not where,
But let my charger bear me where he would;
Yet well he bare me, for at break of day,
At the first hint of dawning in the East,
Brake all about me in the leafy world
Singing of myriad birds, and at my feet
A spring of living water gurgled by,
And on my armor gleamed the gracious dew.
There rested I all day and through the night,
But when another dawning woke the world,
I rose and journeyed on, for still the quest
Blazed like a beacon o'er the morning mist.
But perilous the way began to grow;
Chasms and grottoes, and dim precipices
Lurked in the shadows on the narrow path;
My charger left behind, I crept along
Painfully clambering from stone to stone
Slowly toward the summit. Far below
Faintly the world gleamed, insignificant.
The desert shrunk and was a little thing,
For well I knew the end was near at hand.
And onward, ever upward I did climb
By dim defiles, o'er cavernous recesses
Till almost past endurance grew the way,
When suddenly, on looking up, I saw
Far overhead a blossom in the sun
The perfect Rose of beauty, large and full,
Yet inaccessible, too high, too fair!
O Sire, my heart cried out to win the Rose
As though it were the chalice of our Lord;
So when I failed to reach it life grew dim
And meaningless and futile all attempts
To strive for other beauty in the world.
Oh many a way I sought to reach the Rose;
First, piling stone on stone and climbing up,
Almost I reached it, almost touched, and fell

And night closed round me and without a star
Crept through the long, still hours and found the dawn.
And lo! the Rose's heart was full of dew:
And as I strove again to reach it, fell
Upon my burning forehead one cool drop
And kissed away the fever of despair.
Then woke the soul unto a wondrous peace,
Saw in an instant what a better thing
It is to fall upon the highest quest
Seeking the perfect beauty, than to win
Aught that is less than all. And strength withal
Came with the consciousness of failure. Strength
To ride forever on the quest, nor swerve
From the fixed path. And as I stumbled down
Found my good charger and set forth again
Over the desert to thy court, O Sire,
Lo! All the waste had vanished; in its stead
Blossomed the fair rose-garden of the world.
For, Sire, the Rose breaking in blossom there
Upon the utmost border of the land,
Made all the world a fragrance, made the sky
Bluer and deeper, yet how near to earth.
And on my lips trembled a joyous song.

Lo! As I rode, O Sire, across the land,
Tall roses bending o'er my saddle bow,
Rich, creamy blossoms of the sweets of life,
And passion bursting into scarlet bloom,
And pain that turns to beauty crimson clad,
And gentle nun-like sisters all in white,
Bending before me in humility,
Half-opened dewy buds and fully blown,
And some whose petals fluttered to the ground,
All sound and sweet, no canker in their hearts,
Each seemed a far reflection of the Rose,
Like, yet unlike, as men resemble gods.
And as I rode through flowery fields I saw
Old age a slumber in a magic garth
Amid the roses underneath the stars.
And farther on were men within the fields,

Caretakers of the garden of the earth,
Binding the golden sheaves through sunny hours
While in their hearts the happy harvest sang.
And far beyond them in a flowery mead
Roses of love break into perfect bloom,
Kissing sweet kisses of eternity.
And Sire, I saw the children playing there,
Even where once they played in loathsome sand,
But in their hair the yellow rose-gold clung
And blossomed in their cheeks the blood of roses;
While far before them gleamed the shining way
Across the fair rose-garden.
Sire, I come,
Knowing this miracle, and knowing too,
That though the world be all rose-garden, still
Blossoms for me but one, the sovereign Rose.
And I would fare again across the world,
Be it rose-garden still, or waste of sand,
All one to me so I behold the Rose
There where the heavens meet the earth, and make
Earth all that we desire. And so farewell!

THE FAITHLESS

Translated from the French of Sully Prudhomme

By Edith Summers

I love you while I wait my destined bride,
She who will come her arm in mine to twine
In those far isles where none may lonely pine,
And friendship's joy and love's first bliss abide.
Adown the valley rolling green and wide,
Where walk thy vanished sisters of all time
Will come that one whose soul was made for mine,
And all unmarked of thee I leave thy side.
For thou thyself wilt follow his first call
Whose heart leaps up within him at thy view;
Our future lives will fade and vanish all,
And we will pass from each as travelers do
Whom the same ship brings home through calm and squall
To part — and soon forget their friendships new.

LIFE AND LETTERS

THE play by the Russian writer, Leonid Andreieff, printed in this issue, has, it seems to us, greater strength and beauty than any Russian play yet printed in *Poet Lore*. Indeed, it comes the nearest to being a work of real inspiration and genius than any Russian play we have yet met with anywhere. It has that same lack of dramatic construction — at least according to our ideas — which seem to be characteristic of Russian plays. There can hardly be said to be any action in the dramatic sense at all; only an episode in Russian governmental oppression, and the revealing, by means of this episode, of the characters of an intensely interesting group of people who are watching far up upon the mountains in a lonely observatory the progress of events. But with what an exquisite touch of penetration and sympathy are the various and on the whole lovable people brought before us. The mother so human, brave, and gentle, and with a delicious sense of humor; the father grandly living aloft and misunderstood among his stars, and yet with a personality that calls out the utmost devotion from such finer natures as Inna, Marusia, and Petia. Then there is the poetic and excitable young Jew, and Petia with his wild, symbolic devotion to his bride, down-trodden Russia. The hero of the episode is Nicholas, whom we never see, yet we grow more and more conscious of his power through the suspense and anxiety of all in regard to his fate; and who is there among us who can hear Marusia tell that fate in the last act without a thrill of overwhelming feeling as though for the loss of one we know and love? The effect of this scene is beyond words wonderful.

Here is a play in which there is no hero that appears, no villain except the far-off Russian government, no lovemaking, no strangling psychological conflicts between old and new ideals of love, no dramatic action to speak of; a play in which every one is fine, true, and loyal. Yet with none of the elements a play is supposed to have it is one of the most stirring things we have ever read and with fine acting might hold an audience spellbound. It is full of pathos, of universal human feeling, and of an uplifting philosophy. Andreieff is to be thanked for writing a truly great play that leaves us with only an uplifted outlook upon life, symbolized in the greatness of soul of the three to whom Nicholas was nearest: his father, with an all-seeing philosophy born of the stars, that puts suffering and sorrow among the fleeting phenomena of existence; his wife, whose grief makes her henceforth the servant of suffering humanity, and his mother, whose heart will weep eternally — so should the spirit, the will, and the heart hold itself toward suffering otherwise too great to be borne, until that time when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth. — H. A. C.

BOOKS into which their author has artistically put his true self stay with you. Their power is beyond your realization when you first read them. The force instilled is more important than the story, the situations or their coloring, the characters or ideas. Like the impression of a personality, it remains as the essential fact behind features, face, and figure.

'The Disciple of a Saint,' by Vida D. Scudder, is such a rare book — a strong and beautiful book, having a beauty and influence that is spiritual and individual.

While you read it, you may consciously taste its distinctive beauty of phrase, its balanced threefold structure, with the bud and bloom of the whole story shown in Prologue and Epilogue; you may realize its culture, picturesqueness, and historic bearing upon the past of Italy, or the interest of its conflicting characters and the emotion of their love or piety. You may be quite carried away with it, delighting in Neri's sudden rescue from the angry crowd in Bologna, in Catherine's miraculous breadmaking, or haunted by the charm of the beautiful Ilaria in the grotto of the White Lady, and the significance of the contrast with Catherine's radiant social energy. Or possibly, if you are captious, you may criticize some passing episode or pietistic manner catching your notice over-dominantly. Both these results have been felt by its readers, sometimes both by one and the same reader. Interchange of impressions among a group interested in the book attests this. But the main great thing about it is that after you have closed it and effaced its details you feel subconsciously its characteristic compulsion of ardor.

Like a drama or a poem worthy the name, 'The Disciple of a Saint' has what too few modern works of fiction have,— a motive, not a 'purpose,' quite a different thing; an inner vital motive that artistically pervades, unifies, and uplifts it. If one may venture to define it, it is a sense of the conflict between sensuous and intellectual desires and joys, and desires and joys more compelling than these, because more spiritually potent. This conflict is embodied in the hero, Neri, and it is made socially and historically significant by its implied application to a similar conflict stirring all Italy in the fourteenth century between the desires and joys of the reborn pagan culture and those promised by the Church for social regeneration through self-denial and sacrifice.

Neri's beautiful cousin, Ilaria, offspring like himself of pagan Italy, is the impersonation of joys transcended by the joys of the spirit, breathing attraction through the ardent soul of St. Catherine of Siena. The love story of the book is the story of the sacrifice of Ilaria's mere sweet humanity to the divine triumph of the saint in the soul of her disciple. But Neri, like his

spiritual mother, Catherine, is said to have 'practised, not the mysticism of abstraction derived from the Orient, dear to the hermits of Lecceto and to many other mediæval contemplatives, but that other mysticism which in the whole world of visible being sees Love made manifest to sense. The earth was to him no finality on the one hand, no illusion on the other, but image or sacrament of the Unseen.'

The contest and division the story has been at pains to draw between the joys of the seen and the unseen is close upon fusion and unity in such mysticism as this. There is a modern plane of life upon which the aspirations of sense and spirit complement each other. Perhaps of this life such a life as Neri's is the seed.— C. P.

NAZIMOVA as Hedda Gabler. What a vista of emotions she opens up to me; what others try so hard to do, so obviously hard, she does with so much ease and dripping nicety. This is, I think, the expression, for her effects fall from her with almost greasy ease and facility. Nazimova is the obvious genius who does seemingly without effort what others try and fail so abjectly to do. She wades through a rich sea of art; wades languorously with an almost disconcerting surety. Characteristically she goes at once to the meat of the matter. Boredom is the major note of Hedda's infinite, minute, petty boredom. In this she gets sympathy from her audience; it is a disease as fashionable as appendicitis. By an unerring master stroke she makes Hedda stir with unutterable boredom as she dies; that even in her death — the supreme moment of interest in her life—she is a trifle ennui. Maybe the glimpse of the new she is entering is disappointing? Would it be sacrilegious to suggest this? It is one of our pet theories that an actor should act all over. Nazimova acts from her head down. Her back speaks: her arms describe emotions and paint ideas: her hands and fingers punctuate, emphasize points, and spread out her tones; her feet keep time with her thoughts; are slow, restless, quick, or impatient, as the case may be. Her eyelids speak louder and more vehemently than most actors do with their whole beings: her eyes are a drama in themselves. Nazimova is an actress! charming personalities we have in plenty: accomplished virtuosoes are numerous, but an actress! one who can paint opposite, antagonistic individuals and portray them through the same medium. These one can count on one hand and at that would the thumb be called into service? — *Arthur Row*

THERE is a dainty book, published not so very long ago, which will have a perennial charm as a tiny Browning anthology. It is made up of Mrs. Browning's ' Sonnets from the Portuguese,' and six other of her lyrics begotten of the emotion aroused by Robert Browning's wooing, together with all the very few poems wherein Robert Browning himself may certainly be caught indirectly unlocking his heart. It was Mr. R. W. Gilder's happy idea to group these autobiographical poems in this attractive shape, and he prefixed a sympathetic and interesting introduction to the love-history thus written in poems. He supplies from their letters, and from other sources, dates and many another item of interest, supplementing the record of 'the most perfect example of wedded happiness in the history of literature — perfect in the inner life and perfect in its poetical expression.'

Commenting on the Sonnets, which Browning was first to praise when he said, ' I dared not reserve to myself the finest sonnets written in any language since Shakespeare's,' Mr. Gilder says:

' Every one of the forty-four " Sonnets from the Portuguese " follows the Italian method rather than the English or Shakesperian sonnet form. Within the form chosen they have an interesting mingling of regularity with irregularity. In only seven of the sonnets (Sonnets iv, viii, xiii, xvi, xxvii, xxxv, and xliii) is there a full pause at the end of the octave. Otherwise there is a great regularity, the whole forty-four poems having the same scheme of rhymes, there being uniformly but two rhymes in the octave and two in the sestet (arranged thus: 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1; 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4). In the seven sonnets where there is a full pause at the end of the octave, six of these are true pauses, but in one (Sonnet xliii) there are other pauses which break the effect of the octave. Again, in only three of these seven (Sonnets iv, xiii, and xliii) are the quatrains of the octave marked. Speaking technically, then, Sonnets iv and xiii are the nearest perfection, though as poems they rank no higher than others in the series. In this series, though there are such rhymes as " burn " and " scorn," " desert " and " heart," " south " and " truth," the writer has fortunately not ventured upon such extreme experiments in rhyming as earlier she conscientiously pursued. It may be further noted that in fourteen of her other group of forty-four sonnets, all in the Italian form, she rhymes differently in the sestet. . . .

' No technical analysis can discover the elements of endless attraction and power of inspiration contained in these poems. It would seem as if the breaking down of the barrier between octave and sestet, in this case, was by instinctive and fortunate choice, and in accordance with the peculiar and individual flow of thought and diction . . . . in their profound vision, their

flaming sincerity, the eloquence with which they express the self-abnegation no less than the self-assertion of genuine love, they transcend the distinctions of sex and proclaim authentically not only the woman's part, but also that which is common, in the master passion, to both woman and man.'

Besides 'One Word More,' 'Prospice,' and the 'Lyric Love' passages from 'The Ring and the Book,' Mr. Gilder was almost half-minded to add to the poems representing Browning's lyric expression of his love, the little poem 'My Star,' the more so as he found in the Love Letters his own authority for saying that Elizabeth Barrett Browning was his 'Star'— in his letter to her, postmarked November 10, 1845. 'I believed,' Browning wrote, 'in your glorious genius and knew it for a true star from the moment I saw it; long before I had the blessing of knowing it was MY star, with my fortune and futurity in it.' In the midst of his querying about it, Mr. Edmund Gosse sent Mr. Gilder a letter giving his view upon it as follows:

'I cannot for a moment consent to believe that "My Star" refers to E. B. B. What is the analysis of the symbol? Somebody or something is like spar—an object hiding in a dark place, absolutely invisible to the ordinary gazer, but flashing (to the poet,— who stands or moves at a particular angle —) "now a dart of red, now a dart of blue." The poet has discovered this "star," and has praised it so loudly and so long that his friends cluster round and "would fain see it too. . . ." But he cannot show it. It is invisible to any eye but his, and they must solace themselves with the publicity of Saturn. All this is incompatible with the idea of E. B. B., who was a famous poet, extremely before the public, herself a "Saturn" long before R. B. knew her. . . . My own conviction has always been that R. B. did not indicate a person at all by "My Star." I think he meant a certain peculiarly individual quality of beauty in verse, or something analogous. He was sure that it flashed its red and blue at him, was a bird to him and a flower, but he despaired (this is quite an early poem) of making his contemporaries see it. They must solace themselves with Wordsworth or with Tennyson or with the famous and popular E. B. B., or with the recognized and hieratic forms of æsthetic beauty. Some years ago I came across by accident a phrase of the French sculptor Préault. He said: "L'art, c'est cette ètoile: je la vois et vous ne la voyez pas." Was not R. B. thinking of this? Prèault was by a few years his senior. I have never made use of this, but I give it to you as (I think) important. That the Star had nothing whatever to do with E. B. B. I regard as absolutely certain.'

'THE PILGRIMS,' a poem, which is a series of poems, American even in its separable unity, has grown up under Mr. Nathan Haskell Dole's cultured and affluent fancy, in fulfilment of the request made him to write the commemorative poem for the exercises of last August, at the laying of the cornerstone of the Pilgrim monument, at Provincetown.

An extremely original and interesting plan underlies this poetic work. Its scheme is to knit together in a composite national song poems of the unpretentious daring of the early Pilgrims, their Mayflower voyage, and historic initiation of democracy with poems of the multifarious achievements of their sons in the New World.

The triumphant progress of the nation and the march of the centuries appear suggestively in the four movements of this symphonic poem. The first depicts the voyage of the Mayflower and its significance. The second relates to the signing of the famous compact off Provincetown and its importance as herald of democracy. The third is a dramatic scherzo in which certain Pilgrims, having reached old age, describe to their grandchildren the incidents of the first landing. The fourth movement would be called in music a 'free fantasia.' It tells in about forty poems of varying lengths and rhythms of the outgrowth of the Pilgrim settlement. They give a history and picture of American civilization. There is a 'Song of Labor,' describing the experiences of the fishermen off shore and on the Banks; of roadmakers in olden and modern times; of the newspaper as picturing all phases of life. There are songs of holidays: July Fourth, Labor Day, Lincoln's Birthday, etc. There is a 'Song of Light,' picturesquely tracing the spread of illumination from the tallow 'dip' and the bayberry candle down to electricity. There is a 'Song of the Fleet.'

One of the ingenious enhancements of the celebration of the voyage of the Pilgrims to this new land is a little cycle of songs of other historic imigrants whose adventure was the seed of great civilizations: songs of the Phœnician and Norse sailors, and of Greek and Roman exiles. The easy versatility of Mr. Dole appears throughout the work in the variety of meters utterly redeeming the verse from monotony. These are skilfully selected to suit the genius of each race. The song of the Ionian exiles, for instance, is written in graceful sapphics. Here are the first five stanzas:

'Thin was the soil our mountain-vale offered,
Sloping down sharply where the sea-margin
Curved in and out with numberless islets
Smiling in sunshine.

'Here lived our fathers, peaceful and happy;
Here stood the temples carved of white marble,
Facing the sea, the azure Ægean,
Home of Poseidoni.

'Room has grown scanty, forth we must wander,
Seeking new lands where cities may flourish,
Building new shrines for Zeus, Aphrodite,
Pallas, Apollo.

'Farewell, Ionia, marble-rich homeland!
We from Sikelia, gazing with homesick
Hearts, full of longing, oft will remember
All the old legends.

'We will remember streamlet and mountain,
Unto the new land bear the old place-names,
Build us like temples, white-marble-columned.
Carve us like statues.'

The serious purpose of the whole is to inspire patriotism, to waken civic pride to picture

'The comedy, the tragedy, the strife,
The passion, the enormous labor; to rehearse
The daily history; to show in terse
Dramatic narrative three centuries rife
With infinite growth, Life personal, World-Life.
What marvelous choice for poet's triumph-verse!

'Only a segment of the circle grand,
Only one billow from the boundless Main,
From off the beach only one grain of sand;
Yet in that segment, billow, crystal grain,
Somewhat of the beauty one can understand,
And so the labor is not wholly vain!'

Mr. Dole has been laureate American for a number of civic and historic occasions, and some five or six other poems and odes are included in the extremely handsome, privately printed volume of 'The Pilgrims and Other Poems,' issued this December. This is his third book of verse, 'The Hawthorn Tree' and 'The Building of the Organ' preceding. Although the most serious and substantial, it is his most varied and flexible poetic achievement.

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